

I Wanna Do Bad Things (With You)

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I Wanna Do Bad Things (With You)

by [Fandom_ransom](#)

Summary

Will was just trying to make it through life as a small town waiter without his ability to read minds landing him back in an institution.

Hannibal Lecter was committing to mainstreaming when he smelled something he couldn't resist, coming off of a cute waiter from Wolf Trap, Virginia

Strange Love

Crawford's Bar and Grill was a cozy-looking roadhouse with neon beer signs in the windows, helping illuminate the packed parking lot. The only reason it was this full was that Wolf Trap had 2 dinners and Crawford's was the only thing besides the rest stop open after 9 pm.

The hum of conversation was mixing with Mary Chapin Carpenter singing "Down at the twist and shout" as Will danced from table to table taking orders, handing out drinks, and setting down plates.

The music and conversation are loud as Will moves through the predominantly white crowd of rural Virginia folk. There is a thirty-ish-year-old man, a few pounds overweight, sitting with his wife and teenage son. As Will moved toward him, he looks up and makes eye contact, and before Will can block it out he hears the man's voice echoing in his head, hollow and surreal "I'm just going to have one beer tonight Jesus one beer that's all..."

After pushing his glasses up from where they've slid down the bridge of his nose, Will smiles sympathetically at him as he puts a beer down in front of the man. Then puts down a basket of fries in front of Man's wife. She is carefully made up, however, she has the wrong haircut for her face." Better not gripe about me eating fries not after what I did for him last night.." she's thinking, sounding aggressive. Will pushes himself out of the thought before he finds out what she explicitly did with her husband.

Will then puts a burger down in front of their son. Will can tell that he's smart, restless, and slightly androgynous. He's thinking "I cannot wait to get the hell out of this podunk town..."

Will never sympathize with anyone more at this moment, "Make sure you do, and before it's too late because every year you wait? You just get more and more stuck here. Believe me, I know."

All three of them stare up at him, surprised. The Teenage Son's face goes white.

Will, deeply embarrassed to have revealed himself this way, He can't get away from the table fast enough. He does really try not to respond to people when he hears what they're thinking, "I'll get yall some ketchup." As he spins and walks away from the table.

Will finds himself hearing a cacophony, from every single person in the bar. Will stops walking, closes his eyes, and Takes a deep, calming breath. The din of the other People's thoughts fade away in a satisfying decrescendo. Satisfied, Will opens his eyes, gives himself a little reassuring smile. He can do this. He will not let this curse get the better of him today.

Will leans against the bar, checking his orders. Behind the bar, Jack Crawford mixes drinks. Jack is strong, with graying hair and dark eyes that Will has heard women think immediately put you at ease. Jack moves his head in time to the music as he works; this is a man who likes his job.

The phone behind the bar rings; Jack picks it up, "Evenin', Crawford's...Chilton..."

Will shoots him an apologetic look.

"Yeah, he's right here..." Will shoots him a panicked look and shakes his head as he hands the phone to Will. He covers the receiver with a hand and says, "I'm so sorry, he knows not to call me at work, and also I don't want to talk to him."

"Will. It's okay. You don't abuse the privilege, as Arlene does. And also, if your doctor calls, you should answer."

"Arlene is sweet, don't talk shit about her. Also, he hasn't been my doctor since I was fourteen, he has no business calling me and trying to get me to have a conversation."

"Well, tell him that and get back to work."

Will glares and puts the phone to his ear, "what do you want?"

"It's been a while, I worry."

"You want to write a book about me. And I have told you no. Repeatedly. Goodbye."

"William, together we can figure out what you are."

Will stopped to think, it would be nice to know why he can do what he can do, his parents made him see Dr. Chilton when he was a kid. It scared them. His ability to peer inside other people's minds.

"Will..." The Doctor sounded hopeful as if he knew Will was considering his offer.

Just to crush those hopes, Will says "Ethically, you need my consent. You don't have it. Good night." Before he could hear another word he hands the phone back to Jack, who hangs it up for him.

"Is he asking you about that damn book again?"

Will nods, "I don't know why. It's not like I ever gave him anything to work with. Ever Jack. He doesn't even know my goddamn favorite color. All I ever did was play mind games until my parents died and I didn't have to see him anymore."

"Don't have to see who anymore?" Another waitress asks as she approaches the bar. Dawn Gree, is a newly 21 brunette who doesn't expect too much out of life and is quite pleased with what she gets. She's a good time kind of girl.

"A shrink" Jack answers for Will and Dawn nods. She's gotten to know Will quite well from working with him and rumors around town.

"Mack and Denise Rattray are just about to sit down in your section." Dawn points out before taking a pitcher and walking to the pool tables on the other side of the bar.

Will's face darkens; this is exactly what he needs tonight. The Rattrays are rude, calling him crazy and causing a goddamn scene because they think it's funny to make other people miserable.

Jack notices Will's soured mood "Come on, don't let 'em get to you. They're not worth it."

Will smiles a very weak, very fake smile at Mack and Denise Rattray as they slide into a booth. They're both somewhere between 30 and 50, hard-living, aggressive.

Denise is wearing an ill-advised halter and short shorts. Mack spots Will and smiles back waves. He looks like he might be crazy.

Will's lifeless smile remains, but his shoulders drop visibly as he makes his way to their table. Holding his pad, trying to come off as cheerful. Cheerful means better tips, "What can I do for yall tonight?"

Mack smiled up at him thinking "wrap your lips around my slim reaper. That's what you can do for me..."

Revolted, but struggling to not show it. He keeps his pen poised on the paper, ready to take their order and get the hell away from them.

Mack eyes him suggestively, "How 'bout we start with a pitcher of Bud."

Avoiding his eyes, Will says "Aaaaaall rightie. Anything else?" He glances at Denise, staring at her flatly.

"Onion rings. With mustard." She says but Will hears her think "God she's pathetic like a dog that's been kicked too many times.."

Will looks back at her, he's hurt, but beyond that, he's pissed, he knows Denise knows he's irritated so he says "Coming right up." All too perky. He turns and takes long strides from the table. He won't run.

Mack watches his ass as he goes. Will doesn't have to turn around to know it, he's caught Mack several times before.

"I think he's retarded." Denise says rather loudly before Will makes his way into the service alley to put their order in.

The service alley isn't well lit. The only light comes from the kitchen at one end and the light from the bar and dining room down the hall but Will likes it. It's far enough from the customers that everyone can talk with each other and there aren't unwanted thoughts pushing their way into his skull.

Arlene is on her cell phone and is sneaking a smoke, as per usual around this time of night "Honey, if Rene tells you you're too young to watch a scary movie on HBO, then I'm siding with him... " She sounds sweet and patient. Then suddenly irritated "I know he is not your father. But your father does not want to live with us anymore, remember?"

Lafayette Reynolds is at the grill. He's one of Will's favorite co-workers because he always says what's on his mind, Will never accidentally hears anything he hasn't already said. Lafayette's in his 20s, African-American, solidly built, not in the least bit feminine, even though he's wearing lipstick and eye shadow, subtly and rather artfully applied. Under his white cook's apron, he's in clubwear. He almost dances as he cooks, moving loosely to music only he can hear.

Will likes watching him cook. Lafayette is so carefree and Will wishes he could be like that.

Through the open pass-through, Will clips his order to a line, unhappy. "Onion rings. And if you drop a few on the floor, that's fine with me."

Lafayette, who flirts at anything with legs smiles at Will and says, "you look all prettied up in yo' tight pants. You got a date?"

Not in the mood for Lafayette's antics Will says "No, I do not have a date. I get bigger tips. When I wear these stupid jeans. And I get even bigger tips when I act like I don't have a brain in my head. I hate it here

Lafayette Laughs. He's probably high. "Yes, girl, that is it. These damn rednecks are suckers for packaging. And you the prettiest package here."

Arlene is still on the phone with her kid, but she's stomped out her cigarette.

Dawn pretends to clutch her pearls "I'm hurt, Lafayette."

It's only because otherwise, they're all scared of me." Will mutters.

"They ain't scared of you, honey, they scared of what's between your legs." Lafayette winks and lifts his hands to show at least a foot of distance between them.

"Lafayette, that's disgusting. I won't listen to that. Also, your food will burn." Will says.

Arlene has finished her phone call, "how Do you even know what's between his legs, Lafayette?"

"I know that every man with a secret talent is lanky."

"It's not a secret if the whole town knows."

"What the hell are we even talking about now?"

"Lafayette! Shut the fuck up!" Will shouts

"Oh, please. Everybody is not gay. And not everybody wants to have sex with you." Arlene says

"You would be surprised, Arlene. People you know. That's all I'm saying." Lafayette says, "Also, Sweet Will ain't my type."

"Well, I don't want to have sex with you," Dawn says.

"Me neither. And I don't think Will does either." Arlene says, trying to put the conversation to bed.

"No. I'm sorry, Lafayette, but I do not." Will crosses his arms over his chest.

Lafayette laughs, "Yall bitches do not know what you're missing."

"No, honey, you don't know what you're missing." Dawn giggles.

Will puts up with customers and does his job. The Rattrays seem to be content to sit around and bother him until close.

He's at the bar waiting on Jack to make drinks when he feels something, something big, something unexpected. It feels as if the music and conversation fade, replaced by a mix of people's thoughts, which is more subdued, calmer, sounding further away than normal.

Will instinctively turns around and looks at the front door just as it's closing. Either somebody just left or they just came in.

Will has never felt like this before, he's wondering why he just felt such a jolt of excitement. Behind him, Jack is watching something, alert.

Music and conversation fade back in and Dishwalla's "Until I wake up" starts just as Wills' eyes wander onto a tall man, seated in a booth semi-shrouded in the darkness he is a strangely handsome man.

He's in his late thirties, but Something tells Will that he's much older. Sandy, slicked-back hair, maroon eyes. He seems rugged, but with an air of refinement. (Probably the well-tailored suit) He's looking straight at Will.

The man is observing him. His expression doesn't change - no smile, no leer, nothing. There's something unnaturally calm about him. It's unsettling, but also sexy.

Will quickly turns around, interested. For the first time in a long time, "Oh my God. I think Crawford's just got its first vampire."

Jack quietly, eyes the man, "I think you're right." He's being careful with his tone but Will can tell he's not thrilled.

"He's in my section. I ain't serving a danger." Dawn says.

"Can you believe it? Right here in Wolf Trap?" Will sarcastically says.

"Then you serve him." Dawn says as she takes off her apron, "I'm going on break."

He grabs his tray and heads off. He ignores Jack's look of concern and sadness.

The man watches, eerily calm as Will approaches. As he gets closer he realizes just how handsome the vampire is, with high cheekbones, and his hair is slicked back. His stillness seemed like a deeply centered confidence, nothing darker.

Will arrives at his table, "Hi, what can I get you tonight?" He doesn't make eye contact.

"Do you have any of that synthetic bottled blood?" His voice is deep and rich, yet soft and still, with a European accent.

Will feels himself stand up taller and is surprised at the effect it has on him. He doesn't dislike it. He won't let the vampire know that though

"No, I'm so sorry. Jack got some a year ago, but nobody ever ordered it, and it went bad. You're our first Vampire."

The man gives the slightest of smiles "Am I that obvious?"

"Oh, I knew the minute you came in. I can't believe nobody else around here seems to."

"He does." The vampire nods toward Jack.

"Oh, don't worry about Jack. He's cool. I know for a fact he supports the Vampire Rights Amendment." Will isn't sure why he's still talking to the vampire.

"How progressive of him. Perhaps I will have the chance to count him as a friend."

There's an awkward beat of silence before he says, "Not fond of eye contact. Are you?"

"Eyes are distracting, you see too much, you don't see enough. And-And it's hard to focus when you're thinking, um, "Oh, those whites are really white", or, "He must have hepatitis", or, "Oh, is that a burst vein?" So, yeah, I try to avoid eyes whenever possible." Will says, he carefully leaves out that it's easier to slip inside others' heads when he is making eye contact. But as he finishes his piece he looks at the vampire. in the eyes. Of his own volition. There's a moment, as they just look at each other. A strange peace seems to exist between them, which Will may have never felt before, although he doesn't know why it's there.

"Oh! Can I get you... well, is there anything else you drink?" He breaks the tension.

"Actually, no. But you can bring me a glass of red wine so I'll have a reason to be here."

"Well, whatever the reason, I'm glad you are here..."

Will shyly smiles; the vampire actually smiles back.

Mack interjects, "Don't mind Will none, Mister. He's crazy as a bedbug."

Will turns beet red, as Mack Rattray leans over the back of the adjoining booth. The vampire watches him closely, observing his reaction.

Will is embarrassed he wants to punch Rattray in the face, "I'll just get your wine for you." He grumbles walking away, working to mask how upset he is.

Hannibal turns to watch him go, wishing he hadn't. Behind him, Mack Rattray leans further over the back of the booth, extending his hand. "I'm Mack Rattray, this here's my wife Denise."

"Hi!"

Hannibal remains completely focused on Will for several beats before turning back to the Rattrays.

"Good evening."

The minutes pass while Jack tends to the bar. Will leans against the bar, the late-night rush is over and things are finally starting to die down. They're watching the scene unfold as the Rattrays have joined the Vampire at his table. Denise keeps pushing her hair back, exhibiting her bare neck, acting overly flirtatious. And the vampire is clearly responding, as he can't take his eyes off her, and when he speaks, Will catches a glance at his extended fangs. Deadly and alluring.

Will isn't interested in the Rattrays, just the vampire, "You really think she'll let him bite her?" Will asks

"Oh yeah. Don't you know how many people are having sex with vampires these days? And sometimes, those people disappear." Arlene says as she takes a cocktail and disappears. Leaving Jack and Will to keep talking

"I don't get the sense that he's so careless."

"Okay, you spoke to him for like a minute. You don't know how many people he's sucked the blood out of over the last however many centuries he's been alive." Jack points out

Will shrugs and keeps looking over at the table subtly, "it's interesting how the synthetic blood has everything they -"

Jack quietly interjects, "Are you willing to pass up all your favorite foods and spend the rest of your life drinking SlimFast?"

A beat of silence passes between the two. Will knows he's right, "I want to know what the hell those Rattrays are up to." he grabs his tray and heads off.

The Rattrays seem to be doing their best to seduce Hannibal. Denise is leaning in, showing off her cleavage, "I mean, people have always discriminated against me -"

Mack interrupts, "Oh boy, have they ever."

"- because I just never felt like being what society wanted me to be, you know?" She finishes her thought.

"Me neither. Me neither." Mack says as if Hannibal didn't hear what he said the first time.

"So we know what it's like for you," Denise says, bringing her hand up again as if she was presenting her neck to him. Again.

Will shows up at their table abruptly, seemingly intent on interrupting whatever is going on. "Can I get yall anything else?"

Mack and Denise look up at her, startled. The vampire seems glad to see him; the Rattrays do not, "Mack?"

Mack gave him a steely smile. "I'm fine."

"Get the hell out of here." His thoughts are screaming

"O-kay, then! How about you, Denise?"

Denise just leans back and looks at the ceiling, not even paying attention to Will. Her eyes are in the Vampire Thinking:

"...big guy so he's probably got eleven or twelve pints in him holy shit that's almost two hundred ounces - "

Will is realizing that they're V addicts, they're going to try to harvest this Vampire's blood and get high. Someone is going to get hurt.

"Bet we could get five hundred an ounce in Dallas -"

Will abruptly says "I'm going to bring y'all a free round of beer, okay? Don't you go anywhere." He needs to figure out a way to separate the group, to get the Vampire away from them.

Mack glares up at him; Denise ignores him, too wrapped up in her thoughts.

Will hears Mack, "The hell is your problem?"

Denise's thoughts are so damn loud, "...finally pay off those goddamn credit card bills -"

Will Gives the vampire a pointed look before he heads off; hoping that the man can somehow sense what Will knows, that this couple is going to try to hurt him.

But he just watches Will go with a furrowed brow.

Will rushes up to the bar, and tells Jack, "We have to stop them"

"Stop who? Why?"

"The Rattrays! They're going to drain him and sell his blood! We have to stop them!" Will suddenly realizes that he's worried for the vampire, who has superior strength and speed compared to humans. He doesn't know why he feels scared for him but something isn't sitting right.

Sam eyes him, concerned, "No we do not. We do not have to get anywhere near that vampire. Besides, you're on shift."

"Then I'm taking my break as they leave. Just to make sure nothing terrible happens in your parking lot." Will says.

"Will--" Jack starts but his eyes are over Will's shoulder. Will turns around to see the booth is empty.

"I have to do something -"

"Will. A vampire can take care of himself, I promise you."

Will looks at him, not so sure. Suddenly turns and rushes out the front door. The parking lot is not quite as crowded as it was a few hours ago. Still, there's a fair number of cars. Will scans the lot and sees nothing. He takes a breath, and exhales slowly. Closes his eyes. And true to focus. He sees a pendulum swing beneath closed eyelids and then he faintly hears Denise.

"- so thick like molasses DAMN that'll bring a pretty penny -"

Will's eyes pop open, and he looks toward the far end of the parking lot, at the edge of the woods. He knows that's where he needs to go. He quickly but stealthily moves toward the edge of the lot. He stops when he spots a length of heavy chain in the back of a pickup. He decides to take it, taking great pains to be as quiet as possible.

The vampire, lying back on the grass, his fangs extended, his mouth opening and closing silently, helplessly. Will sees his hands, feet, and neck are all bound with lightweight but strong silver chain, and he's lying at the edge of the woods. Mack is on one side of him, yanking a cruel-looking leather tourniquet tightly around his arm, just above the elbow.

Denise kneels at his other side, fixing a new vacutainer to the needle she's stuck into his forearm. Three full vials of blood are already on the grass beside her, Will only notices because the glass is reflecting in a bit of moonlight that has made its way through the trees

"Hurry," Mack grumbles.

"I told you we should have taken him home," Denise says

"Too dangerous."

The vampire suddenly spots Will who is kneeling behind a car silently twisting the chain around his wrist. Will makes eye contact with him and nods slightly. As if to say he's here to rescue him.

The vampire is watching him intently, his eyes steady. It's now or never. Will stands, moves quickly and stealthily from behind the car, and before Denise can even finish looking up at him - He brings the chain down hard against Mack's head and back.

Mack cries out, drops the tourniquet, and stumbles forward, onto the helpless vampire. Mack quickly scrambles off him and turns to face Will, his eyes blazing.

"You crazy bitch - !" He pulls a nasty-looking knife from his boot. Will glances down at it, then glances over at Denise is too busy switching out Vacutainers to be of much help. But her eyes are shooting holes of hate toward Will.

Mack lunges at Will, and he jerks back; Mack slashes at his arm, missing by mere inches. On its recoil, the chain wraps around Mack's neck tightly, and pulls him to his knees, as if by magic. His knife drops.

Will is surprised. He's never done anything like this before.

He doesn't notice the woman with startling blue eyes, watching the whole scene from the nearby woods.no one does.

Mack reaches for the heavy chain around his neck, making choking noises. Pulling the chain from Will's grip.

Denise is eyeing the knife as she deftly clips a new Vacutainer into place. As soon as she's done she lunges for the knife but Will beats her to it. He Grabs the knife and steps back, brandishing it as if he has any idea what to do with it. He's never done anything like this.

Hannibal is suddenly becoming aware of something, of a presence nearby. He twists his head toward the woods.

He doesn't have a clear look at her face, but he does see the sparkly 1960S cocktail dress she's wearing as she nimbly sprints off through the darkness.

Mack struggles, unable to get the chain from around his neck. His wife stands and moves toward Will, livid, "This is not your business, you stupid cunt."

Holding the knife steadily Will says "Now see, that just proves how low-rent you really are." Will was a little shocked that he said that he usually doesn't waste his breath on people like Denise.

"Do you have any idea who you are messing with? You do not want to be on my bad side."

"I'm not sure you even have another side, you cheap Christmas trash." Will wasn't sure if his insult was any good but it felt good to say it

Denise reaches for the vials of vampire blood. Will jabs toward her with the knife.
"That doesn't belong to you."

"I will kill you for this," Denise says in a low whisper

"Get. Out. Now." Will never thought in a million years that he'd be in a standoff. Will can tell that Denise considers fighting him, He's scrawny, scruffy, and inexperienced. He tries to seem confident and more than willing to inflict serious damage on Denise should she attempt it.

Denise finally grabs Mack by the chain around his neck and drags him toward their beat-up red sports car. "This ain't over." They finally drive off

Still holding the knife, Will drops to his knees and deftly unwraps the silver chain around the vampire's neck, hands, and ankles. He's unsettled to see fine lines burnt, red, and wet, where the silver was. Smoke is rising from these cuts. Will never thought a vampire could be subdued alive.

Will is even more unsettled when the cuts start to heal in front of his eyes. As if they never happened, "Wow." He whispers.

He is momentarily taken off guard as car headlights shine in his face. He looks up at the Rattrays' car barreling right towards them. Thinking quickly, he moves around to the Vampire's Head and reaches under his arms.

Using whatever adrenaline is still surging after the fight to pull them towards the woods with all his might. They fall back behind the tree line just as the car speeds by dangerously close. Will watched it Swerve to avoid hitting a tree just in time, then is gone.

Will has to take a couple of moments to catch his breath. The vampire moves, and brings his now unbound wrists up to his chest, smoke trailing from them. Whatever he's been through, it's obviously still painful.

"I am so sorry I didn't get here faster..." Will says between gasps

The vampire looks up at him, his expression is unreadable.

"You'll feel better in a minute, right? I don't know a lot about," Will gestures towards him, "vampires."

The other man doesn't answer, just keeps struggling to move. Will is suddenly embarrassed for him, seeing him so weak like this. Vampires don't like to project weakness.

"Do you want me to leave?"

Hoarsely the vampire answers, "No. They might come back, and I can't fight yet."

Will frowns, not liking this. He isn't a violent person. Just then...A collie trots up and looks at both of them, sniffs around, highly alert, "Well, hey there, dog."

The Collie wags its tail, and licks Will's face. Approaches the vampire, barks once or twice is not unfriendly, then suddenly runs off.

"He's checking on you." The vampire seems amused.

"That's just some old dog that hangs around the bar sometimes. He must live nearby. I hope he isn't stray."

"You like dogs?" He struggles to sit up. Instinctively, Will reaches to help him, but he pulls back from him. Hurt, he turns around to give him some privacy.

"I guess you're not too happy about being rescued by a human."

It's not easy for him but the vampire says, "Thank you."

Will, now a little irritated. He gets an idea. Takes a breath, closes his eyes, and listens. The night sounds fade, get a little fuzzy, then are replaced by... nothing. Will opens his eyes and quietly gasps realizing for the first time in his life- "I can't hear you!"

The vampire says louder, over-articulated, "Thank. You." As if he gets it a lot with his European accent.

Will turns to him, kind of excited. Without thinking, takes the vampire's face in his hands, looks into his eyes, and concentrates deeply. He is clearly surprised by Will's disregard for his personal space

"No, I can hear you, but I can't..." He relaxes completely, and closes his eyes. Again, nothing. Will smiles, deeply happy, suddenly understanding why he feels the way he feels around the other man. He opens his eyes, still smiling.

"Aren't you afraid to be out here alone with a hungry vampire?"

Will quickly puts some distance between them. but he still says " No."

"Are you assuming that since you came to my rescue, you're safe? Vampires often turn on those who trust them. We don't have human values, you know."

"A lot of humans turn on those who trust them too. I'm not a total fool."

He's found the fine silver chain that was wrapped around him earlier; He quickly entwines it around his neck and looks back at him, a little smug.

The vampire sits up quickly, just to let Will know how much he has already recovered.

"You have other, very juicy arteries. There's one in the groin that's a particular favorite of mine."

"You might be a vampire but when you talk to me you will talk to me with respect."

The vampire eyes him surprised, apparently unaccustomed to being told what to do. A trace of a smile floats on his face, "Would you like to drink the blood they collected?" He holds up one of the vials.

"No. I'm not an addict and I'm not looking to become one."

"I understand it makes humans feel more healthy and improves their sex life."

"I'm as healthy as a horse and I have no sex life to speak of, so you can just keep it." Will isn't ashamed to admit that he hasn't had sex. His ability makes it hard and it makes him self-conscious.

"You could always sell it." Will realizes the vampire is testing him.

"I wouldn't touch it." He stands abruptly.

So does the vamp, he crosses to Will, looks at him closely, which is a little unsettling for Will.

"You're different. What are you?"

"Well, I'm Will Graham, and I'm a waiter. What's your name?" Will tries not to be too eager when he asks for the Vampire's name.

After a beat of silence, he answers "Hannibal Lecter."

"Hannibal Lecter?" Will giggles a little

Hannibal clearly doesn't appreciate his laughter, but after the nerve-wracking events of the past few minutes, he needs a release. "Of course, you have a foreboding name. Do you live in a castle too?"

Hannibal stays silent while Will's laughter gradually runs its course.

"So silver, huh? I thought that only affected werewolves." Will asks as he plays with the chain he grabbed earlier. "I'm not implying werewolves exist, I mean, that's just what you always see in the movies."

Stiffly Hannibal says, "I would appreciate it if you didn't share this information with anyone. We don't like for our weaknesses to be public knowledge."

"Oh. Okay." Will coils up the chain so it's wrapped around his knuckles, not unlike the chain from earlier, "Well, see ya, Hannibal, I gotta get back to work."

Will emerges from the woods, a little worse for wear. Looking up, he spots Jack standing in the parking lot, worried; he's obviously been looking for him. When Jack sees him, his face is flooded with relief, "Thank God. You okay?"

"I'm fine. And for your information, not all vampires can take care of themselves."

Will passes him, and heads back toward the bar. Jack lingers, looking out at the dark and still and eerily quiet woods.

Will is driving his Honda civic home in the early hours of the morning down the two-lane road towards home, through the woods, illuminated only by headlights, he's turning the events of the night over in His mind. Remembering the peace he felt in Hannibal's presence.

He turns off the main road, down a single gravel road. The house seems like it's in the middle of nowhere. Built in the middle of a clearing, surrounded by wood on all sides, built in the mid-nineteenth century and added to haphazardly over the years. It has white clapboard siding, a tin roof, and a screened-off porch. Will thinks It manages to be ramshackle, quaint, and warm all at once. Aside from the yellow bug light at the door, there is a single light on upstairs.

The motion detector floodlight comes on as Will's car passes the trigger and pulls up and parks next to the 1976 beige ford Grenada out front. Will gets out and heads inside. None of the doors are locked and Will sighs, he's told his grandmother repeatedly to keep them locked. You never know who could be lurking around.

Will walks in, taking off his shoes in the entryway, he passes the framed photographs lining the stairwell. School pictures of Will throughout the years; one photo of him looking absolutely miserable in a little league uniform, one with an old dog licking his face, A few photos of himself in Halloween costumes and others in Christmas sweaters, his high school graduation photos, one of which he's standing with his grandma, and finally one taken when Will was about two years old the only picture with his biological mother.

Will's mother had left when he was young, So his father had moved from Louisiana back to Virginia to live with Gran. She helped raise Will.

Will's father later remarried but they never had enough money to move out, but Gran was kind and generous and let them all stay, so long as they were employed and helping around the house with chores. Will reminisce while climbing the stairs up to the second-floor hallway. He raps on the door to the master bedroom, then walks inside. Gran didn't mind as long as he

The room wasn't too big, but Will found it warm and cheerful. Adle Graham sits up in a queen-size antique spindle bed, reading a bodice ripper romance novel. She wears a long sleeve cotton nightgown and her hair is completely white. Her cat is curled up on the bed next to her, pouring contently. Adele's crinkly eyes light up when she sees Will enter.

"Hey, Gran."

Adele closes her book, "Hi, honey."

Will sits on the side of the bed and pets the Cat. He wishes they had a dog, but his gran wasn't fond of dirty paws on the linens. "Hey, Tina." Will regards the cat, before turning back to his grandmother, "Guess what happened tonight?"

"You got a date?"

"Uh, no. A vampire came into the bar."

"Ooooh! Did he have fangs?" She asks intrigued.

Will smiles grimly. "He did. But most of the time, they stayed retracted."

Adele sits up, "Did he bite anybody in the bar?"

"Oh, no, Gran! He just sat and had a glass of red wine. Well, he ordered it, but he didn't drink it. I think he just wanted some company."

Adel took a moment and then said, "I Wonder where he stays."

"He wouldn't be likely to tell anyone that." Will was thinking about the smoking wounds, if anyone knew where Hannibal was staying they could hurt him again.

"No, I guess not. Did you like him?" Gran leaned forward as if Will was about to tell her his grand love story.

Will took a moment then said, "I don't know. He was real interesting." But he did like him, and Adele sees that and smiles, "Well, I'll let you get to bed -"

"Okay, sweetie. I was just staying up 'til you got in. Gotta make sure you're safe."

Will snorts and kisses her on the cheek, then stands. As gran has aged Will has taken a more protective role.

"Come on Tina," Will calls out to the cat who jumps off the bed and follows Will out. He closed the bedroom door as gran turned out the bedside lamp.

Across the hall, Will makes his way into his small room. It has always been furnished the same way with a white-painted chest of drawers, an antique vanity that Will used to make fishing lures. The mirror had been covered by an old blanket. Between two windows on the opposite wall was Will's double bed, which was lit by the moonlight streaming through the open window.

Will sighs and takes off his work uniform and crawls into bed. Tina sleeps curled up against him.

An unexpected breeze rustles the curtains, waking Will up from an unrestful sleep. All his life he has had nightmares, though he couldn't quite remember what this one was about. Then Will got a strange feeling that he was being watched. He takes a beat, gets up, crosses to the window, and looks out.

Hannibal Lecter stands in the clearing below, looking up at him.

Will steps back from the window, taken aback. He stands absolutely still for a moment, then grabs his robe and heads out of the room.

Will comes out the front door and down the steps, but Hannibal is nowhere to be seen. As he turns, looking for him, He turns and suddenly Hannibal is right next to him, out of nowhere, startling him. Hannibal has ditched his tie and jacket from earlier and the top two buttons of his collared shirt are undone, revealing his chest.

“Oh! Hello...” Will’s voice comes out eerily calm.

Hannibal smiles and starts to unbutton his shirt the rest of the way. Will, much to his surprise, starts to undo his robe. Although he’s only wearing his boxers and a sweat-stained T-shirt underneath. He’s a little embarrassed, “Huh. I never thought I would be having sex with you - at least not so fast...” He trails off.

Bill’s smile widens, and his fangs extend, “Who said anything about sex?”

Will quickly pulls his robe closed tight, “Now, see, that really pisses me off.” He gives Hannibal a hard look. Then all of a sudden Will looks at Hannibal and sees a corpse, Out of nowhere, an autopsy scar is cut into his chest, his eyes are glazed over, and his pale complexion is even more colorless, and then Will starts screaming.

Then Will is sitting up in bed, unsettled by his dream. He glances at the window, gets up, and closes it. He’s had countless nightmares before, but he’s usually the one doing terrible things, hurting people. Not wanting to dwell on it any longer, He climbs back into bed and as his head drops toward the pillow he drifts into a dreamless sleep...

In the afternoon sun, Will is sitting in an aluminum chaise out front by the gravel drive. He is wearing a white T-shirt and cargo shorts. Since Will works a lot, he doesn’t have too much in the way of clothes that don’t belong to his Crawford’s uniform. He’s reading from his copy of Moby Dick. Content to take a break away from people.

The peace of the summer breeze is interrupted by a car pulling up the gravel drive. Will looks up and squints at the little red 1958 Jaguar XK 150 Convertible. The car is unique and Will knows exactly who drives it. Will looks around for his bookmark but before he can find it, the door opens and Dr. Frederick Chilton steps out. He’s wearing an ill-fitting suit and a smirk as he strides toward Will purposefully. “William, I heard about an incident where a grumpy waiter beat up the Rattrays. If you’re showing signs of violent behavior, perhaps you should be placed back in my care.”

Finally locating his bookmark, Will uses it and closes the book, “I don’t think that’s for you to decide.”

“You’re not denying that you attacked that couple?” Chilton scoffs

“I’m not a child anymore, I think you are a shit therapist, a terrible doctor and you’ll lie and use any excuse to place me under your care again,” Will says.

“You wouldn’t be enjoying the summer sun today if it wasn’t for my skills as a doctor.”

“My parent’s placed me in your care, they died and the court thought I could benefit from counseling. I am twenty-three, I haven’t been in your ‘care’ for five years. Move on.”

Chilton’s smirk fell, he started toward his ostentatious car before turning around and saying “You could financially benefit from a book deal. You could go on tour, do signings with me, you could pay for a proper driveway!”

Will didn't bother to look Chilton in the eye, "You chose to drive that eyesore out here."

Adele comes around the side of the house with an empty laundry basket, "Frederick Chilton! Leave my grandson alone before I call the police and tell them you are trespassing!"

"I am just here with a lucrative business opportunity for Will to consider, Ms. Graham." Chilton says as if the idea of money would sway Adele

"If he tells you no, he means it! Leave him be!" Adele starts walking toward the porch, muttering something Will can't hear.

"I'll be going, but please, Will, this offer has no time limit. You're young and this could mean good things for you, do call."

Will glares as Chilton gets back into his convertible and drives away.

As Dusk is settling, Will gets ready for his shift. He decides on a black Crawford's V-neck instead of the white T-Shirt. He always gets hit on more and makes more in tips when he wears the V-neck. Not to mention, if Hannibal decided to stop by, it is designed to show off his neck and clavicle.

Will shakes the thought off, as he puts on his belt and tucks the shirt into his jeans. After the dream last night, he isn't sure why he's still drawn to Hannibal. Adele appears at the door, They smile at each other, and Adele comes in and sits on the bed. Their eyes meet and Adele gives him another smile. Will waits for his gran to speak. She doesn't.

"What's up, Gran?"

"Oh, I was just wondering how old you think the vampire is? The one you met last night. I have no idea. Why?"

"Well, do you think he might remember the War?"

"The Civil War? Could be. His accent was European, though."

"Oh, if he does, I would love to have him come speak to the Descendants of the Glorious Dead. You think he might want to?"

"I think he might have a hard time showing up at the Public Library at noon on Thursday." Will points out.

"We could have a special meeting. At night. Or he could just talk to me, and I could tape his recollections. I'm sure the other members would find it so interesting. Even if he wasn't here during those times. Schools here don't teach about Europe during those times, you know."

Will smiles at her, "I'll ask him the next time he comes into Crawford's. If he comes in." Will isn't sure whether he wants him to come or not.

Joseph Arthur's "Stumble and Pain" is playing through the bar speakers while Will makes his way around the tables in his section. It's not a slow night, but it isn't busy either. Just a steady stream of customers since the beginning of the dinner rush. Will is having an okay shift, not too many people are thinking about him in particular, and he hasn't had a single complaint yet.

Then the air in the restaurant suddenly shifts, and Will feels a presence. He turns slowly and his blue eyes meet maroon. Hannibal Lecter has just entered. He's dressed just as nicely as the night before, and the vampire moves toward an empty booth. Will moves toward him. Practically everyone in the restaurant is watching, including Jack from behind the bar.

As he slides into the booth across from Hannibal, he's hearing a cacophony of thoughts right now, unable to shut them out due to his heightened emotional state.

"...bet that's the vampire he saved..."

"What kind of good Christian would..."

"...that whole Graham family is nothing but trash always had been -"

Will closes his eyes, trying to shut out the din. Hannibal reaches across the table, taking Will's hand in his own, gently. The sounds of people thinking cuts off abruptly, completely. It's a relief. Even though Hannibal's hand is cold, terribly cold, Will holds it anyway. Will relaxes, opens his eyes, and smiles. Hannibal is wearing the slightest of smiles himself.

"Good evening, Mr. Graham." People try not to watch, but they don't try very hard. Nosiness is in southern nature, Will supposes.

"Your hand is cool," Will says instead of greeting the vampire.

"Yes. I'm afraid I'm not as warm as the men you must be accustomed to."

"What men?" Will feels a little embarrassed, he withdraws his hand. "What can I get for you tonight?"

Hannibal says nothing, just leans forward and eyes him intently. Will stares back at him, unafraid, "What are you?" He whispers quietly, Will almost doesn't catch it.

"I told you. I'm a waiter."

"No. You're something more than that. You're something more than human."

Not knowing how to respond, Will awkwardly laughs, "I beg your pardon!"

The entire place is watching them - Jack, Arlene, and her boyfriend Rene, Lafayette, Dawn - but Hannibal seems completely unaware of the attention. "Will." He says his name as if he's turning it over in his mouth, tasting it. "Will... may I call on you sometime?"

“Call on me?”

Hannibal smiles and rephrases “May I come to visit you at your home?”

“Oh.” he looks down at the table and takes a moment. It suddenly seems as if a lot hangs on his answer. Will feels everyone’s eyes on him, then he looks up at Hannibal, at his dark eyes, dark, placid pools of silence, then...

“Well, sure. My grandmother would love to meet you.” Then he remembers that his gran asked him to ask Hannibal about speaking to the Descendants of the Glorious Dead, “That reminds me - listen, can I talk to you after work? I have a favor to ask you.”

“Of course. After all, I am in your debt.” He doesn’t sound particularly happy about this.

“Not a favor for me! For my grandmother. If you’ll be up - well, I guess you will be - would you mind meeting me at the employee door at the back of the bar when I get off at, probably around one-thirty?”

“I’d be delighted.”

Will doesn’t show it but he is deeply happy that Hannibal agreed to meet him later and to do something for his gran. Will looks up, to meet Hannibal’s eyes, but they are over his shoulder, Will turns to look and sees Jack at the bar, leaning forward as if trying to hear their conversation, even though he’s all the way on the other side of the room.

“You realize that every person in this establishment is staring at us right now. And they’re staring because I’m a vampire and you are... mortal.”

Will scoffs, “Who cares what they think?”

“I want to make my home here, so I do. I will see you at one-thirty.” He slides out of the booth with grace, nods slightly to him, then turns and walks out of the bar.

As soon as he’s gone the din of everyone else’s thoughts floods into his consciousness, very loudly.

“- even crazier than I thought he was - “

“wonder if it’s true what they say about sex with vampires -”

“won’t be surprised if he turns up dead”

He takes a minute to breathe and closes his eyes, but before he can center himself Jack grabs him roughly by the bicep and pulls him out of the booth and toward the kitchen, the entire restaurant watches.

Jack pulls Will through the service alley, past the kitchen, and inside his office. Jack angrily shuts the door and turns to him, “Will, you are being a stupid kid!”

Will sounds indignant when he says, “Who asked you? I can take care of myself.”

“Really? I don’t think so. Mack could have seriously cut you up last night -”

“Well, he didn’t.”

“-and now you’re setting up a date with a vampire? What, do you have a death wish?”

“How do you know what Mack would have done? And how do you know what I-” He cuts himself off, “No, I do not have a death wish! I just happen to think judging an entire group of people by the behavior of a few individuals within that group is morally wrong.”

With finality, Jack says, “Well, I won’t let you put yourself and the bar in danger. I won’t do it.”

A beat.

Will glares, he means to stand strong but he can feel his lip quivering, “Am I fired?”

Jack’s brow furrows, he seems confused for a moment and then he says, “No! But next time you think someone is being harmed in our parking lot, pick up a phone and call the police, do not go out there alone like a goddamn vigilante!”

Will stands still as a single tear falls down his cheek. Jack’s face crumples; he can’t stand having hurt him. He pulls Will to him, and hugs him, “Aw, cher. Don’t you know I couldn’t stand to lose you -”

Then without meaning too will hears Jacks thoughts, they’re a little fuzzy and broken up but he hears them anyway, “so warm - you remind me of him - smell so good - he was so small- Bella and I cried -love-” Jack’s thoughts sound so different from everyone else’s, there’s a deep bass rumble under everything, almost like an animal growling. And Will somehow was able to find meaning in the snippets and shreds.

Will pulls back from him, stares him in the eyes, hands on his arms, “I have to get back to work.”

“I just want you to be smarter.”

“Oh shut up! And stop bossing me around. I am a grown man, and I am the one who decides what I do, not you.” Will stomps out, slamming the door behind him. It took all of his energy not to tell Jack that he wasn’t a replacement for his dead son.

Only a handful of cars were in the parking lot when Will’s shift finally ended. The neon beer signs in the windows are shut off as Jack finishes up the close for the night. Will zips up a light jacket and stands under a street light illuminating the parking lot. He looks around expecting to find Hannibal...But he’s not there.

He stands there for a moment, not knowing what to do, then Jack emerges from the Employee Door, "Will."

"Jack." Will is upset over Jack trying to control him, Will is not his son.

"You want me to wait with you until -"

"Go home, Jack."

"Good night." He walks across the small rear parking lot to a mobile home, set on a concrete block base, with a small grass yard and a neat hedge. Jack unlocks the door, goes inside, and shuts it. The porch light goes out.

Will is pleased with his independence. But he feels strange thinking about what he's learned about Jack and Bella tonight. Jack shouldn't think of him as a surrogate for the son they lost.

He checks his watch, looks around, suddenly starting to feel unsure of himself. Will Walks around the edge of the building and looks out at the main parking lot, silent and now completely empty, except for a beat up red sports car. Will recognizes it instantly.

Just before he tries to run inside something slams into him from behind, knocking him over as two sets of feet wearing boots start to kick him viciously. With the intent to kill. He instinctively curls up into a fetal position, His whole body contorted in pain, he suddenly spits blood through his teeth. Will can't focus on anything and for a brief moment, he thinks he sees a hulking stag off in the distance, between the legs and in the woods. It's pitch black, and instead of fur it's covered in feathers. He spits up more blood as a particularly hard kick makes contact with his stomach. Will thinks, to himself Oh, I am going to die.

The First Taste

“Where's your fuckin' chain now?” Mack Rattray viciously kicks Will in the side! A battered and bloody Will cries out in pain. He's gotten into fights before, back when he was in high school, but they were always broken up before any serious damage was done. And Will had never been taken by surprise like this, his ability usually lets him know when someone was thinking about hurting him.

“God!” Will continues to cry out as the Rattray's beat the shit out of him. Denise Rattray kicks him on the other side of his ribs so hard, Will rolls over. Will wasn't in disbelief, he is underweight. Then Mack Rattray kicks him again. Will really wishes they would just run him over with their car and get it over with. Denise Rattray gives him another quick kick and then bends down, grabbing him by the hair, “Dumb-ass, curls.”

Will spits blood into her face, then Denise slams his head into the ground.

“Here we go.” Mack delivers a brutal kick to Will's head! Will was barely conscious but he thought that someone's boot should do more damage than that. The Rattrays were just bad at everything, including beating. Then he rears back and yells, “Whoo Hoo.” He's laughing, Denise grabs him and they kiss, oblivious to Will's blood-spattered body as he gurgles and coughs.

Mack Rattray exclaims, “I love you.”

“I love you too, baby.” As they part, an animal begins to growl. Will knows it's the collie that likes to hang around,

“Well fuck you, Fido!” Mack turns around and pulls a gun. Just as Mack is about to fire, Will manages to gather his strength and grabs at Mack's legs. Will can't do much, but maybe he can distract Mack enough for the dog to run away.

Then no sooner than a second later, Mack is flying through the air. Will didn't do anything, he just wrapped uncoordinated limbs around Mack and now he's hitting a tree and falling to the ground at the base of the tree.

Mack groans out “What the fuck...?” There's a whooshing sound as something races toward Mack Rattray. Suddenly, Mack's neck breaks as his head is jerked toward the side. Denise Rattray frantically looks all around.

“Show your fuckin' face, freak!” She's shaking a little as she stands in the eerily silent lot.

Will hears more whooshing, and then Denise's screams, as she, also, is flung through the air. She lands in a broken heap amid some trees. Will slowly flops himself over to look over in that direction and sees the dog staring at Denise Rattray as well. Just as confused as Will.

The dog turns to look at Will, and begins to whimper. As the dog begins to approach him, Will sees a pitch black creature, with towering antlers leaning down to pick him up. Will wiggles as much as he can, but he isn't able to break out of the monster's cold grip.

Cold grip.

Cold. Grip.

Will's weak, gasping for air, and seeing feathered stags and monsters, but somehow he realizes that this creature isn't a monster at all it's..."Hannibal?" he weakly groans out.

"Shhh... I will heal you, sweet Will." As he speaks, the antlers disappear, fading into the branches over their heads as Hannibal carries him, bridal style through the woods. Will blinks and sees that Hannibal is just as he was earlier that evening. Everything he saw was a hallucination.

The woods are dark, or maybe Will's face is so swollen he can't see anymore. But Hannibal carries him until they arrive near a stream. Or at least that's what Will assumes when he hears running water. Hannibal gently lays him on the ground. It still hurts, but somewhere in the haziness he manages to appreciate that Hannibal is being gentle. Will doesn't like being treated like he's delicate, but seeing as all of his ribs may be broken, he can make an exception.

He coughs and sputters some more, but Hannibal continues to shh him until Will isn't conscious any longer.

He awakes to Hannibal licking the wound on his forehead. He hasn't been out for long, which is a good thing, but everything still hurts. Hannibal has removed his jacket and tie, but Will isn't in a position to admire the vampire in a more relaxed state of dress.

Hannibal whispers softly, "Will!" He's cradling his head as Will moans and gasps. Then more urgently he shouts, "Will!"

"I can't feel my legs." Will is panicking, everything hurts, well everything from the waist up. He tries and fails to wiggle his toes. Something isn't right. He needs a hospital, "Hannibal, I need..."

Hannibal raises Will up and rests him against his knee. Hannibal, then rolls up his shirt sleeve and takes a big bite out of his own arm. In the pale moonlight, the blood looks black, "Quick, drink before the wound closes!"

"I don't want to be a vampire." Will slurs out, he doesn't want to live off blood, or the synthetic True Blood.

"You won't be! Goddamn it, Will! Do you want to live or not?" Hannibal is shouting, insisting that Will drink from his arm or he may not survive his injuries. Hannibal places his bleeding arm on Will's mouth. He finds himself unable to resist at first and gulps as he swallows the blood, but then jerks back.

"No!"

Hannibal ignores Will and presses his arm back against Will's busted lips. As Will drinks, he loses all reservations. Grasping onto Hannibal's arm with both of his hands, Will greedily drinks the blood that will save his life. For a brief moment Will wonders if growing retractable fangs will hurt.

As he drinks, Will starts to feel the pain fade to nothingness, he feels his toes and he's relieved. The blood flowing into his mouth starts to thin and disappear as Hannibal's wound closes. But not before Will feels a little tingly. For a moment, Will is annoyed that he might be a little high off of Hannibal's blood. Then he feels grateful that he wasn't beaten to death in the abandoned parking lot.

Now that he isn't moments away from death, Will takes a moment to appreciate the beauty of the moonlight reflecting off the stream and illuminating Hannibal's face. Hannibal once again leans down to lick the blood from Will's forehead. He draws away as Will comes back to his senses.

"Do I taste different from other people?" Will realizes that he was bleeding. A lot. Any lesser vampire might not have saved him, but finished him off. Hannibal was different from other vampires, he was special. Or maybe Will's blood wasn't enjoyable.

Hannibal answers, "Yes ... what are you?"

"Not dead." Will looks away from the stream and at Hannibal who is giving him a deadpan look, "What I am is telepathic. I can hear people's thoughts." Will sees no reason to keep it a secret, it's the least he can do after Hannibal saved him.

"Even mine?"

"No. That's why I like you so much. I can't hear you at all. You have no idea how peaceful it is after a lifetime of ... blah, blah, blah." Will trails off as he starts to rise up. Hannibal helps him move so he is leaning up against a tree.

"May I ask you a personal question?" Hannibal is very formal and polite in asking, despite the fact that he's covered in blood and dirt, and sitting in the mud by the stream.

"Hannibal, you were just licking blood out of my head. I don't think it gets much more personal than that." Will vacantly says.

"How do you manage a social life with men your own age? Their only thought must be..."

"I don't date." Will answers before Hannibal can find a word to finish his thoughts.

"Ever?"

"I've... I've been on a few dates." Will remembers a time when he was sixteen and a boy from school asked him out. Things were going smoothly until he found himself sitting opposite from the other young man at one of the booths in Crawford's Bar and Grill. Will remembers it so vividly. He remembers exactly what he was doing when it all turned sour. He was squeezing mustard onto his sandwich when he heard it.

“...Man, I can't wait to see him naked. I wonder if he's smooth all over. Nothing worse than a boy who shaves with a big, black bush...”

Will got so mad he squirted the mustard into the other boy's eyes and face. And stopped shaving his facial hair completely, now he leaves a shadow.

“Not every guy was a pig.” Will says, There was another date where the guy had been nothing but polite but he was thinking of settling down with Will, after one date. Will's not afraid of commitment but the other boy had just kept thinking about it. It didn't seem sweet, it seemed possessive. So Will never called him back.

Will awkwardly laughs and shakes his head, “But ... it always ends up the same. I've never been on a second date with someone.”

“There must be some people who know about your talent.” Hannibal doesn't call it an ability, he calls it a talent and Will finds that sweet.

“The people closest to me. But... we never talk about it. And I do my best to stay out of their heads. Over the years I've learned how. I figure it's kind of unethical to listen to my family and my friends, my boss. But... they know. Other people suspect or... they think I'm psychic. Most people just think I'm crazy.” Will leaves out the bits about Dr Chilton and the institution, that isn't a conversation he wants to have. It leaves a bad impression on people, and that's the last thing he wants to give Hannibal, who just saved his life.

“What does it sound like?”

“It's sort of like ... a stream of consciousness. Gets weirder when people are mad, or... upset and... sometimes... sometimes it's just images.” Will has been like this his whole life, and he's never told anyone this. Not the doctors or priests, or even his gran. It feels good to tell Hannibal. They stare at each other for a moment. As Hannibal draws closer, Will breaks the building tension. Shattering it, really, “I should be gettin' home!” He stands suddenly and feels a surge of energy underneath his skin, “Wow! I feel completely healed!”

“You are.” Hannibal tells him.

“Do doctors know that V-juice can do this?!” Will asks Hannibal.

“No ... and we wanna keep it that way. I should show you to your car.”

Will knows how to keep a secret, he doesn't know who he'd tell that he was healed by vampire blood, given his reputation everyone in town wouldn't bat an eye. They'd think that it's just that crazy Graham boy talking nonsense. Also, his closest contact in the medical field was Chilton and he doesn't want to give that man a reason to waltz into his life. But beyond that, Will respects Hannibal and his wishes. So his miraculous healing would stay secret.

Hannibal and Will walk chastely down a moonlit street.

Will and Hannibal have reached the deserted parking lot at Crawford's Bar and Grill. There's a dusk to dawn light that illuminates part of the area. “How old are you? Am I allowed to ask

that?" Will asks as they walk towards his car.

"I was made a vampire in Lithuania in the 1800, when I was 30 human years old."

"Were you in the Civil War?" Will asks

"The American Civil War?" Hannibal raises a curious brow, he finds Will's question amusing, like it isn't something he is often asked, or asked at all, "I was already a vampire by then. I witnessed a lot of the bloodshed. Why?"

"I wasn't sure, but I didn't think it would hurt to ask. Would you be willing to come, talk to my grandmother's club? It's... mostly a bunch of old people who had family in the war. They call themselves the Descendants of the Glorious Dead." Will tells him.

"The Glorious Dead? There is nothing glorious about dying in a war. Bunch of starving, freezing boys -- killing each other so the rich people can stay rich ... it's madness." Hannibal has been alive for so long, he's definitely seen some horrendous wars. But Will can sense that he's hiding something.

"I'm sure it was awful." Will can't empathize, but he can sympathize.

"Would it make you happy if I did this?" Hannibal asks after a brief pause.

"Oh, it would make my grandmother ecstatic." Will tells the vampire.

"Would it make you... happy?" Hannibal asks again.

"Well ... yes."

Hannibal straightens up and adjusts the cuffs on his shirt, he's long since pulled them back down, "I'll do it then. And look forward to meeting your grandmother. When may I call on you?"

"I'm off work tomorrow." Will says with a small smile.

"Just after dark then." Hannibal confirms with a small smile of his own. They reach Will's car and he takes a minute to find the keys he dropped. Will looks down at them keys, turns and notices a light burning in Jack's trailer.

"Huh ... Jack's still up." Will looks back toward Hannibal, but he's gone. Will looks around but doesn't see him anywhere. "Well, that's creepy." Will supposes so is talking to himself. And hanging around in the parking lot where he was attacked. He sighs, gets in the car and goes home. It's been a long night.

Will is passing the time by watching a shouting news program between a reverend and a woman from the American Vampire League. He's watching on a tiny screen sitting on the kitchen counter, while seated at the table.

Will has never been one for debates, or the TBB network in general, but he suddenly found himself supporting the equal rights movement. Probably because of Hannibal. Nan Flanagan, the vampire is tall, or at least Will perceives her that way, you never truly know with television. She also has startling blue eyes. The reverend has a southern accent and brown eyes and a balding head. He isn't really remarkable, except for the bigotry he's spouting about how vampires are dead, and therefore they shouldn't have basic rights.

Rev. Theodore Newlin is on screen, a microphone in his face, with the bottom of the screen showing a banner: The Fellowship of the Sun Church, "We never should have given them the vote and legitimized their unholy existence! The American people need to know these are creatures of Satan! Demons! ...literally! They have no soul!"

"But Reverend Newlin, you must be aware of polls that show consistently growing support for vampire rights." The reporter responds, adding fuel to the reverend's fiery anger.

"Those polls are fixed! Do you know how much money these monsters have given to politicians of both parties?! ... as well as the corporate media?!"

Will rolls his eyes, Newlin should know that he's on a corporate media station, if his conspiracy was true, why would they allow him to say that kind of stuff on air.

Nan Flanagan cuts in, "That's nonsense! Vampires don't seek to control human policy. It's of very little interest to us. We simply want the..."

Rev. Theodore Newlin interrupts, "You can't trace any of it! It's all been laundered."

"Are you accusing my organization of criminal activity, sir?" Will can tell she's upset, outraged even, but she keeps a cool and even tone, knowing she'd be crucified in the public eye for showing any aggression towards a human being.

Reverend Theodore Newlin ignores Nan Flanagan completely and says, "I will not speak to her directly, Sharon," to the reporter. Will supposes his use of her pronouns are a step up from him calling her "it" and "that thing" when vampires made themselves known to the public two years ago.

Sharon asks, "Why is that, Reverend Newlin?"

"My commitment to Christ Jesus, praise his name! ... compels me not to recognize her kind!" The vein in his forehead is bulging so hard, Will wonders if it will burst.

"Well! That's gonna make it difficult to have a dialogue." Sharon says, trying to persuade the reverend to at least have a conversation

"I will not speak to her directly!" He exclaims.

"Okay" Ms. Flannagan says, her eyebrow twitches ever so slightly in annoyance.

The male announcer's voice comes on "Thank you, Sharon. Now, TBBN..."

Will, using the remote control, turns off the television as Gran enters the kitchen.

Will isn't religious but if he was he supposes Jesus wouldn't mind if someone was a vampire. God is supposed to be an all knowing, loving entity, he wouldn't have created vampires or whatever evolved into them if he didn't want them to be on the planet. Will's gran is religious, so he says, "I don't think Jesus would give a shit if somebody was a vampire." testing the waters to see how Adele would react.

"I don't either, honey." she says, she's moving around the kitchen cooking breakfast. As an after thought she says, "Don't say shit and Jesus in the same sentence, dear."

"Of course. Sorry."

She's quoting the bible, using it to cite evidence that God and Jesus love everything and everyone. Before Will can tell her that he doesn't need anything, she's placed a big plate of eggs and sausage in front of him, "Don't you dare try to tell me you've already eaten I raised you and I know you don't eat when you're supposed to."

Unable to argue, Will takes a bite of sausage as Gran puts her own plate on the table and joins him, "Is this sausage different from what you usually make?" Will asks, though he doesn't have a healthy pattern when it comes to eating, he knows what Adele Graham's cooking tastes like.

Her brow furrows in worry "No."

"Huh ... it tastes so much more complex than it usually does." He shrugs it off and eats another bite.

"Oh, dear, you think it's gone bad?" She asks, pushing her own around on the plate with her fork.

"No, it's delicious!" Will reassures her. He could never disappoint her, "It's like I can close my eyes and I can see the farm the pig lived on, and feel the sun and the rain on my face, and even taste the earth that the herbs grew out of." Will says, God he sounds high. Maybe he still is, he did drink a lot of Hannibal's blood. A lot.

Gran looks at Will strangely. He hopes she can't tell that he's high on fucking vampire blood. He doesn't want to worry her over what happened last night.

Before Gran can ask what the Hell he's talking about, the door squeaks as Alana Bloom walks in. Alana was quite literally the girl next door, she had lived in Wolf Trap her entire life, and had only left to go to college. Alana was so familiar with Gran that she had a standing invitation to their home. She had helped Adele around the house while Will was institutionalized. She was a very pretty young woman, Will had a crush on her when they were younger, but it never went anywhere as she only saw him as a friend and Will was okay with that. "Hey, Miss Graham."

"Good morning, Alana." Adele smiles at her fondly. Gran goes over and gives her a kiss on the cheek as Alana tries to pour herself a cup of coffee Gran says, "No, you sit down. I'll make a new pot."

“All right.” She says, knowing that if Adele was going to mother hen you, there was no way to put up a fight.

“Hey, Alana.” Will says, pushing his mostly full plate towards her.

She gives him a bright smile “Thanks.” She takes a few bites then says, “I heard about you and that vampire. I’m glad to see you’re still alive. You obviously did not hook up with that vampire last night.” Will hates how fast news travels in a small town.

Will doesn’t answer but looks downward. Suddenly finding his hands very interesting, he hopes she’ll drop the subject.

Instead she sighs in exasperation, “Will, sometimes you are just plain dumb.”

“Shut up!” He says, rolling his eyes, and then he lowers his voice, “Lucky Gran was already in bed when I got in last night.”

“Did he bite you?”

“No!” Will decides not to tell her the part where he was beaten in a parking lot and Hannibal came to his rescue, and licked the blood off his head.

“Are you sure? Because you know they can hypnotize you.” No one actually knows if vampires can do that, but it’s been in movies since Nosferatu.

Whispering sarcastically Will leans in and says, “Yeah, and the mentally ill need to be locked up, all Catholics are pedophiles, and atheists will burn in hell.” Watching Reverend on TV earlier had given him plenty to work with

Gran comes back into the kitchen with a bag of coffee. But before she can start a conversation the phone rings.

“Hello...Oh! Hey! Evalee!” Gran takes the phone and walks into the other room.

“Who told you about Hannibal?” Will asks

“More like who didn’t. Dawn said something, Arlene said something, Mrs. Foytenberry said something...” she trails off then says, “Does Dr. Chilton know?”

“Probably by now,” Will slumps down in his chair. The last thing he needs is for Dr Frederick Chilton to come by his house again, or worse, work, to harass him about getting involved with the undead creatures of the night, like he knows what’s best for Will. Or that it would make great content for his book.

“Have you considered enrolling this coming semester?” Alan asks Will. Ever since they graduated high school Alana keeps trying to push Will into going to college. She graduated with an Associates and jumped right into a bachelor’s in psychology (which Will hadn’t been thrilled about).

“No, college isn’t for me, I don’t need the stress or the noise.” Will responds

Alana knows what Will means, he half expects her to give a speech about how Will deserves more than Wolf Trap, that he's wasting his potential on waiting tables but before she can get a word in edgewise, Gran hurries back into the room, "You will never believe what happened!"

"What happened?" Alana asks

Gran sits down across the table from Alana and leans in, "Well, apparently, a tornado touched down over at Four Tracks Corners. It turned over that rent trailer in the clearing. You know the one?"

"Uh huh." Will nods

"Oh ... and it killed that couple that's been staying there." Adele says, shaking her head. As a good christian woman she believed that life was sacred, that everyone had the potential for good, and the Rattrays hadn't had an opportunity to show it.

"Mack and Denise Rattray?!" Alana asks, shocked

Will can't believe it, Mack and Denise were terrible people. They tried to kill him. And now they were dead. Like, never harass him ever again dead.

"They were trapped under the trailer. Mike Spencer said they were crushed to a pulp."

Will just knows the whole town is sitting at breakfast tables having this same conversation about how terrible it was that a tornado killed two people. He also knows they're talking about him, the last bit of news was that he asked out a vampire.

Will decides to drive over to the trailer. He's not sure what possesses him, maybe he wants to help clean up after a natural disaster, maybe he wants to see proof that the Rattrays are dead and not coming after him again.

We are at a clearing at the Four Tracks Corners. Will pulls to the Rattrays rented trailer. There is crime scene tape, placed to cordon off the site. When he pulls up the trailer is demolished. Trees have fallen over and smashed in the roof, all of the glass from the windows shattered, their shitty sports car was crushed under debris from the pieces of the trailer's walls, and fallen branches. As Will ducks underneath the tape to get a good look at the destruction a van pulls up and Sheriff Bud Dearborne and another man, wearing a vest marked "coroner", get out and walk toward him.

"Well! William Graham What are you doing here?" The coroner asks, he seems vaguely familiar and is awfully cheerful considering the destruction.

Sheriff Bud Dearborne comes around the driver's side of the van and says, "Will ... You know Mike Spencer?" He makes an awkward introduction instead of questioning why Will is on the wrong side of the yellow tape.

The name rings a bell and Will remembers the coroner from a long time ago, "Of course! You buried my dad." Will doesn't let the bitterness over his loss creep into his tone. His feelings

for his father are complicated, but that doesn't change the fact that it hurt when all of the sudden he was gone.

Mike Spencer gives a small chuckle and says, "Yep! My new job ... parish coroner, but I still run the funeral home."

"Well, that's gotta be convenient." Will states.

Sheriff Bud Dearborne suddenly seems to remember that he's not here to socialize and that Will is technically breaking the law, "Will, this is still a restricted crime scene. Why are you here?"

"Oh, when I heard what happened, I just had to come look." He vaguely gestures to the carnage behind him, "What an awful thing."

"You know, I did hear you weren't too fond of the Rattrays." the Sheriff says with suspicion, as if Will could have been responsible for a goddamn tornado.

Will keeps his face neutral "Where'd you hear that?"

Dearborne says "My niece is the emergency room nurse in Monroe. Says somebody busted up old Mack pretty bad last night."

Mike Spencer says "Everybody says that somebody was you!"

"Well, they were hurtin' a... friend of mine." Will states, he wasn't sure what Hannibal was to him so it took him a moment to find a word for it, and decides on friend, as if a friend literally licks your wounds for you.

"This be that vampire I been hearing about? The one who is livin' at the old Lecter house?"

"The old Lecter house? Just across the field from where I live?" Will asks, he had no idea Hannibal was living so close to him, though last he checked, the house was in terrible shape, with decaying wood, broken windows, and graffiti along the side. There were rumors that the house was haunted. Will didn't put much stock in ghost stories.

The Sheriff says, " That's the one." While pointing his finger at Will.

Mike Spencer cuts in and says, "Your grandmother lets you associate with a vampire?" As if it's any of his business what Will does with his life.

"You can take that up with her." Will glares, then adds, "I'm sure she'd just love to know that somebody thinks she's not taking proper care of me!"

That seems to shut up the old coroner. As sweet as Adele Graham is, she is a force to be reckoned with when you end up on her bad side.

Will turns his attention back to the sheriff, "The Rattrays were draining him. Draining vampires is against the law, isn't it? I was simply doing my civic duty by stopping them."

“And now they're dead!” He exclaims.

Will rolls his eyes, “Yeah ... killed by a tornado.” Will can read minds, not control the weather, though he'd trade his ability for that one in a heartbeat.

Sheriff Bud Dearborne yells, “Tornadoes hop! This one didn't land anywhere else. And nobody around here heard or saw anything like a tornado last night.”

Will looks around and notices for the first time that all of the damage is only dealt on the property where the Rattrays were staying then says, “Are you telling me you seriously think one man could do all this?” He gestures, he can't believe he's being blamed for all this!

“He's not a man.” Mike Spencer says.

And then it clicks, however strange Will might be for once no one was blaming him. They were accusing Hannibal, “They're really not that different from you and me, if you bothered to try to get to know one ...”

“Will! You're a good kid. I hate to see you go down this path.” Bud says his voice tinged with sadness.

“Well, lucky for you, Sheriff Dearborne, nobody's forcing you to watch! Now, if y'all two rednecks will excuse me, I've gotta go!” Will marches back to his car and drives home. On the drive he really thinks about it, and how Hannibal tossed Mack aside like he weighed nothing. He remembered the fear on Denise's face. Maybe Hannibal was capable, and motivated. He wasn't a superhero. Will tries to forget about it, but he keeps circling back to last night. Hannibal was unnaturally fast, extremely strong, and he quite literally was out for blood. He killed them, then made it look like an accident.

Will wondered briefly if Hannibal drank them dry before he did it, but that would've shown up in an autopsy. The police would have known without a doubt that the only vampire in Wolf Trap, Virginia was to blame.

Hannibal was more than a bloodthirsty creature of the night. He was a calculated killer, but that wasn't what frightened Will.

What scared him was the fact that he didn't care about it at all. That he still wanted to soak up all of Hannibal. To be consumed by him and consume him in return.

Will pushed all thoughts to the back of his mind as he pulled into the gravel driveway, got out of his car, and went inside.

Will comes home to his grandmother cleaning. Gran is vacuuming the floor in the living room when Will comes inside, she has already dusted, swept and mopped, and done all the dishes. Will is a little upset that she hadn't waited for him to come home and help, but Will supposes he got his stubbornness from her.

“You know, he sleeps in the ground all day. I don't think he's gonna even look at the rug.” Will says as he hangs up his dark green bomber jacket on the wooden hook by the door, and taking off his boots.

Gran simply says, “I ... I'm not doing this for him. I'm doing this for me, so I can be proud of my home. And how do you know where he sleeps?” She lifts an accusatory eyebrow.

“I don't, actually. I've just heard about that on TV.” Will is distracted by the smell of rotting food. “What's that smell?!” He asks

“What smell?” Gran asks, she looks confused by Will's statement, after all she had been making sure the house was in tip top condition.

“It smells like rotten food, or something. You can't smell that?” Will can't believe that Gran can't smell it, it's permeating and filling up the entire room.

Gran gestures to the room, “Well, find it.”

Will starts looking around. He follows his nose and finds himself standing over his grandfather's old chair. He moves the piece of furniture and finds a small piece of food. A crumb really. The smell is pungent and gross, “You can't ... smell this?”

Gran shakes her head.

“I better just throw this out.” Will walks into the kitchen and throws it in the bin, which is also smelly, he figures he'll just take it out before Hannibal comes over. If Will can smell it like this because of the blood he drank hours ago, Hannibal most definitely will be able to smell it with his heightened senses.

Gran “Oh! Will.” Gran calls from the living room.

Will quickly ties off the bag of trash and calls out in response, “Yeah?”

“Alana is coming over this evening as well.”

Will doesn't like surprises. “Gran.” He all but groans.

“Well, we were talking and she said that she wants to meet the vampire for herself,”

“I don't know why everyone's getting their panties in a wad about some stupid vampire?!” Will says, he doesn't need everyone in his life babying him about this, he's an adult, he can decide if he wants to spend his time with a vampire or not. Alana doesn't need to insert herself into Will's life anymore than she already had.

Gran asks, “Did you want to be alone with him?”

At first Will doesn't answer, but gran is leaning in the doorway giving him a knowing smile, “I don't know ... maybe. Aren't you gonna tell me to be careful?”

“You're always careful, William, about what counts. And I can depend on that. Isn't that right?” Will nods his head and takes the trash out the back door, he waits for a moment after tossing the bag in the bin and doesn't head back in until he hears Gran resume vacuuming.

Gran, Alana, and Will are in the kitchen. Alana is helping Gran put together some appetizers and refusing to let Will help in any way, “Look, I'm just saying. Do you want a vampire sucking blood out of you?” Alana says.

“I'm just tryin' to get to know the man, that's all.” Will says, as he tries to grab a plate and bring it into the dining room.

Alana maneuvers out of his way and carries it out herself, “Because that's where it's gonna end up... always does.”

Will leans in the doorway between the kitchen and the dining room so he can talk to both Alan and Gran if he needs to, “What do you know about vampires, anyway?”

“Yeah, I know a lot more than I care to.” She says as she rushes back into the kitchen.

“Hannibal isn't like the vampires in college towns. He's not a hedonist, preying on university students, getting them high and eating them!” Will is getting irritated, of all the people in this shitty town, he never thought Alana would have such backwards views on vampires. And if Will was right Hannibal was a much more sophisticated killer than most vampires.

“I'm not saying he is, but I can't say he isn't.” She gives Will a look as if she's screaming, ‘listen to what I'm about to say William’ “I'm just asking you to be careful.”

“Of course he's being careful, Alana,” Gran interjects on Will's behalf, “He's allowed to make his own decisions. Maybe even fall in love.”

Gran giggles as Will groans, he isn't looking for anything right now, he just finds Hannibal interesting, which isn't something that happens often. He's known almost everyone in this town since he was a toddler. Everyone is predictable and readable, but not Hannibal, and Will wants to spend time with him. Will doesn't think Hannibal plans to kill him or anyone else.

Besides the Rattrays.

Then something clicks.

Hannibal left the Rattrays alive two nights ago when they drained him. He didn't go after them, tear their trailer apart, or suck them dry after they attacked him personally.

Hannibal only did it after they hurt Will.

Holy shit. Hannibal was infatuated with Will. Protecting him, saving him, he was attracted to him. Will isn't sure if he is in love with Hannibal. But he knew for sure that Hannibal was at the very least interested in him.

“I need a minute,” Will says, he grabs a beer and leaves the kitchen. He sits on the porch and waits for the sun to finish sinking down.

Will is sitting on the porch, with the empty bottle in hand, when suddenly Hannibal is standing in front of him. Will jumps, startled because Hannibal is suddenly there. Almost as if he appeared out of thin air, “I ... I don't like it when you do that.” Will says.

“I've upset you.” Hannibal states plainly.

Will stands up and brushes dust off the bottom of his jeans and says “Well ... well, since you're here.” He gestures vaguely to the door behind him and turns to go into the house, but Hannibal does not follow him. “What's wrong?”

Hannibal gives him a small, sad smile and says, “You have to invite me in. Otherwise it's physically impossible for me to enter a mortal's home.”

“Seriously?” Will thought that was a myth, he looks between the vampire and the door “Well, come on, try.”

“I ... I can't. I can't even try, my dear.”

Will tries to ignore the way being called, my dear, feels, “That is so weird.” Will grumbles, then with an over the top cheery voice he says, “Oh, Hannibal, won't you please come in?”

Hannibal simply says, “Thank you.” Then walks up the porch steps to stand close to Will.

“So, if I were to withdraw my invitation, would you have to leave?” Will asks, Hannibal nods his head yes, “Well, I'll have to remember that.”

Will opens the door for Hannibal and follows him inside.

It was strange to have Hannibal inside his house, yet somehow he didn't seem out of place as he sat in the armchair flanking the fireplace, he was poised and otherworldly, but somehow Will could sit next to him and still feel at home.

Alana and Will are seated in the living room, With Alana on the couch across from Will. Who is seated next to the vampire in another chair. Gran is walking around with a tray of food, offering sandwiches to everyone. She wouldn't hear Will or Alana when they insisted she sit down. Adele extends the tray toward Hannibal who just shakes his head.

Gran sounds embarrassed, “Oh, my stars. Of ... of course. You ... you don't... I... I'm sorry.” She sets the tray down and then takes a seat next to Alana. “Your people, Mr. Lecter, they were from this area ... I believe?”

“Yes and No, my father's people were Lecter's, and my mother's people were née Sforza. Over the generations my family lines have traveled across the seas, settling in the north-east

mostly. I have moved quite a lot, I settled here for a short while before people noticed I wasn't aging and I had no choice but to move on."

Gran was obsessed with Wolf Trap's history. She had every family tree almost memorized, "Oh, there are a lot of Sforza left, not around here anymore. They moved out, But I'm afraid old Mr. Lecter died last year."

"Yes, ma'am. That's why I came back to Wolf Trap. There were no living Lecters so I've set up home in the old estate. And as I expect the VRA to pass..."

Will, ever the pessimist says, "Yeah, I wouldn't be too sure about that."

"Will!" Gran scolds.

"No, I am not opposed to the VRA passing. I'm just saying that between The Fellowship of the Sun and organizations like that, it might be years before the bill is passed." Will says. He isn't a bigot and Gran knows it, she raised him. She only raised her voice because Will isn't the best at delivery.

"They're the same rights you have. I have faith that it will pass and that vampires can coexist peacefully alongside humans."

Will wants to believe the sentiment, but he knows that Hannibal is a killer. There was nothing resembling peaceful coexistence at Four Tracks Corners.

"Did you know the Grahams, Mr. Lecter?" Gran asks, hope in her eyes.

"Yes," He pauses for a moment then says, "I remember Jonas Graham. He and his wife moved here when Wolf Trap was just a hole in the road. I was as I am now. Isn't this the house he built? I mean, at least in part?" Hannibal asks gesturing to the harth which was easily over 200 years old.

"Yes, it was!" Adele's voice was full of excitement.

"Did you own slaves?" Will suddenly asks. Like he couldn't keep the question in.

Perturbed, Alana bursts out, "Will!"

Once again, Will wasn't the best at delivery.

Hannibal gives Will a small smile, amused by his bluntness, "I did not, but my father did. A house slave, a middle-aged woman whose name I cannot recall, and... and a yard slave ... a young, strong man named Minus."

"Oh, this is just the sort of thing my club will be so interested in hearing about." Gran says.

"About slaves?" Will asks.

Gran raises her eyes to the heavens, exasperated by him, "Well ... about ... anything having to do with that time." She's referring to the civil war, but Hannibal was a wealth of knowledge,

he lived through the 1800s.

“I look forward to speaking to your club, Mrs. Graham.” Hannibal’s smile is captivating, for a moment Will wonders if vampires were still in the coffin, if he would know there was something supernatural about him, “Now, if it's alright with you, I thought that Will and I might take a walk. It's such a lovely night.”

Will makes eye contact with Hannibal and he thinks even though he can’t read him, he can see that there is history behind his eyes. They don’t have the same sparkle Will has seen in other’s eyes.

“Well ... it's alright with me if it's all right with Will.”

Alana, who hadn’t contributed to the conversation much all night, quickly puts her beer down on the table and stands up facing Hannibal, “I don't think that's such a good idea.” She had been watching him all night though, trying to put her degree to use, psychoanalyzing him.

“I don't think it's any of your business, Alana.” Will tells her.

“He's right, Alana.” Gran says with a knowing look.

Alana’s face flushed as she said, “I just want you to be safe, Will.” Then she turns to Gran, “I just want him to be safe.”

“Alana, I am not a helpless little boy!” Will doesn’t mean to yell, but he can’t believe that Alana won’t let things be. Hannibal was not going to hurt him. At least not yet. Hannibal was infatuated with Will, he wasn’t going to eat him the first chance he got, “I’m a grown ass-man and I don’t need you injecting yourself into my personal life.”

“Oh, I’m sorry that I don’t want you walking alone at night after all the nightmares and sleepwalking!” Alana yells right back, “I’m so sorry that I am trying to prevent you from being alone with an apex predator after you’ve known him for only two days!”

“Christ, Alana! It’s a walk, across the graveyard and back.”

“Don’t take the lord’s name in vain, William.” Adele says sternly.

“I’m sorry, Gran.” Will is genuine in his apology, despite how often he does take the lord’s name in vain in front of Gran and behind her back, it’s a hard habit to break. He tries his best to be respectful of her wishes.

“I am the oldest person here and this is my house. Will is my grandson and I think he can go on a walk as long as he is returned to me in one piece.” Gran leaves no room for argument. Will can tell Alana is not pleased.

“Actually ... I'm the oldest person here.” Hannibal, who quietly watched the whole argument, says.

Gran smiles and laughs.

Then Hannibal addresses Will, "Shall we?"

"We shall." Will takes Hannibal's extended hand and the two of them leave. Will takes a moment to gaze up at the moon and stars, and for the first time all day the sight of them isn't entirely consuming, the vampire blood might finally be working its way out of his system.

"I do hope he's okay." Will catches Alana saying to Gran as they walk away from where she is standing with Gran on the porch.

"He will be." Gran reassures Alana gently.

Outside, Will decides to tell Hannibal he went to the Rattrays' trailer. The night air is cool and refreshing and it takes Will a moment, but eventually he says it, "I went to the Rattrays' trailer." Gran's house was getting smaller as they walked toward the graveyard.

Hannibal smirks and says, "I told you I was strong." He seemed almost proud of it. No, he is proud of it, Hannibal kills for killing's sake, the Rattrays were nothing to him. He could do the same to Will. But Will didn't feel afraid.

"I don't believe I fully gauged the extent of your strength." He says, realizing that he hasn't let go of Hannibal's cold hands as they walk through the night.

"Over the years, we become stronger, and more skillful at hiding what we've done."

Will hums and then says, "You might want to remember for next time -- tornadoes hop, they don't just land in one place."

Hannibal gives him an amused smile, like he's proud that Will would help him hide an act so horrendous, like he sees himself in Will.

"Will the fact that you drank them get you into trouble? You're the only vampire around here." Will asks.

"I'm the only vampire resident in Wolf Trap, but several pass through most nights. There's also a vampire bar in the next town over." Hannibal tells him.

"So ... I guess you've killed a lot of people." Will hoped the way he worded it would let Hannibal admit something. Will couldn't shake the feeling that he got in the car when he left the trailer, that Hannibal had been killing for a long time, longer than he had been a vampire, and that he loved Will. He hoped Hannibal would just tell him.

"I was never sure when I was gonna get my next feed. But it's all different now. There's Tru Blood. I can get donor blood from a clinic in Monroe, or I can glamour someone into letting me feed on them for love, and then they'll forget all about it."

Frustrated that Hannibal would admit to killing for food but not pleasure Will is short when he asks, "Did you feed on the Rattrays?" Will imagines that they tasted like stale beer and cigarettes.

“Yes,” Hannibal said carefully, “ after I'd given you my blood, while you were healing. You drank a lot of my blood.” It was true, Will drank like a man possessed. Like an addict.

Feeling queasy, He asks, “What will that do to me?”

“Well, you'll ... have keener senses.”

Will rolled his eyes, “What else? I know there's more.”

“Your libido will be more active.”

“Is that it?”

“I'll always be able to feel you. I'll be able to find you fast. If you're ever in trouble, that could come in quite handy.”

“Feel me?” Will quirks his eyebrow, he drops Hannibal's hand.

“It's almost as if you are an extension of myself,” Hannibal stops so he can look at Will. Really look at him, as if he was studying a painting, or a sculpture, “I will always know when you are in danger, I will know when you need me.”

“I've never needed anyone before.” Will tells him.

“Of course not. But If you ever do, I will be there.”

They pass under the wrought iron gate that proudly says Wolf Trap Cemetery. Firebugs glow softly in the tall grass, moss hangs from a few of the trees, and a few stars shine in the sky above them. If they hadn't been walking past the mosulems Will supposes onlookers would find it romantic. He lets his hand brush against Hannibal's, not ready to take it again after dropping it earlier, but acknowledging that maybe he could again. The silence between them is comfortable, Will cherishes the fact that he can find peace with Hannibal. That he can't hear his thoughts. But Will wants to get to know Hannibal.

“You said you could glamour somebody into letting you bite them? What is that, hypnosis?”

“It's similar. All humans are susceptible to it.” Hannibal is quiet for a moment and then says, “I could make a human do anything I desire, and then I could make them forget that they had done it, or even met me.”

“Have you done it to me?” Will would like to think that Hannibal was unforgettable, but he wouldn't know if he had been glamourised before.

Solemnly, Hannibal says, “No ... and I never will.”

“Really? Try it.”

Hannibal stops walking and concentrates. Then he looks into Will's eyes with a serious and cutting gaze, drawing closer and closer. Until there is hardly any space between them. If Hannibal was alive, Will thinks that he'd be able to feel his breath. He whispers tenderly, "William."

Will whispers back, mimicking Hannibal's tone and pace, "Yes ..."

"Can you feel my influence?"

In the same whisper as before Will says, "No, not a bit. Sorry." Then he smiles.

Hannibal is smiling back, "This is very strange."

"You don't like not being able to control people, do you? It's not a very attractive trait, Mr Lecter."

"It's Dr Lecter," He gently corrects, "Humans are usually more squeamish about vampires than you are."

"Who am I to be squeamish about something out of the ordinary?" Will points out, then asks, "You were a Doctor?"

"Yes, I find the pursuit of knowledge desirable, and for a brief stint I was a surgeon."

"Interesting." Will says.

"Then I was a psychiatrist. I still technically am one." Hannibal says

Will doesn't say anything, but he supposes the way his smile slowly falls off his face, Hannibal can tell he isn't thrilled with the idea that Hannibal is a psychiatrist.

"Not fond of therapy."

Will remembers a time when he was young and he heard his father thinking "How can our car insurance go up so much after just one ticket? Damn it all to hell, I hate having to ask my mother for money again..."

He had asked him what was wrong, "Damn what all to hell? I can break open my piggy bank if you need some money."

From there he was taken to a psychologist, not Chilton, but the associate who recommended that Will be placed in his care. The psychologist asked him if he knew why his dad brought him there. She put him through a series of tests, in which Will had used his gift and answered questions and was hooked up to machines and had his brain scanned. Will wasn't too upset with this experience, but it was what started his dad's worry and how he ended up with Chilton.

His dad had told him that the psychologist thinks that he just reads body language and is highly observant. But Will heard him thinking "Why was that doctor so scared? Because she was lying to me, that's why. Because there is something to be scared of inside my boy. Oh,

my God. He knows everything I'm thinking! Oh, sweet Jesus! What do I do?! Poor child. He can't ...” Will watched him get up and leave the room, stopping in the kitchen to grab a bottle.

“I was diagnosed with ADD. They tried to put me on drugs but my gran wouldn't let them. She knew that wasn't it. She tried to protect me ... even though I scared my dad.”

“When did you lose him?” Hannibal asks quietly.

“Just before I turned 14 ... flash flood.”

“I lost my sister -- everyone I knew from my human life. Though they are buried in Europe, some of my descendants are buried here in this cemetery.” Hannibal gestures to the tombstones around them.

“You really don't consider yourself human at all?” Will asks, he wonders if Hannibal thinks vampires are superior to humans, but only briefly.

“I'm not human.” He simply replies.

“Can you turn into a bat?” Will blurts out

“No.” He seems amused, “There are those who can change form, but I'm not one of them.”

“Can you levitate?”

“No.” Hannibal doesn't seem bothered by Will's endless questions.

“Turn invisible?” Will is trying to think of everything he's ever seen in vampire movies.

“I'm sorry.” Hannibal chuckles.

“Well, you don't seem like a very good vampire. What can you do?” Will doesn't know why he's teasing and flirting with Hannibal, it isn't something he does often. Maybe it's because Will knows Hannibal is interested in him, he finds Hannibal attractive, despite the fact that he's a killer.

Suddenly, a very serious Hannibal says, “I can bring you back to life.”

Hannibal walks past Will. After a minute, he follows him and sees a house. It's a two-story plantation house that had been updated before in the past, but as the last Lecter aged, the house had started to decline. The yard is overgrown and the house was in pretty bad shape. The shutters were hanging poorly off the windows and the paint was peeling, and the roof was in desperate need of new shingles. Will could tell from where they were standing that the steps up to the porch were suffering rot and if it wasn't taken care of soon the rest of the porch would be damaged, maybe even the rest of the house.

“This is where you live?”

“Since old Jesse Lecter had no living heirs when he died, ownership reverts back to me.”

“I thought that wasn't for sure unless the VRA passes,” Will states, that he only very recently started following the VRA and what it means if it passes, and what laws will change.

“Well, I haven't been getting in any trouble with the renovations I've been doing. Although of course, I've been doing it myself at night. I need an electrician, but I can't get anyone to return my calls.”

“Maybe if I made a few calls tomorrow, I could come by after work and tell you who to contact.” Looking at the state of the house, Will is a little worried a piece of wood might fall and kill Hannibal.

“Thank you.” He stares at Will standing in the moonlight. They stand close in comfortable silence for a moment before he asks, “May I?”

Will doesn't have to be able to read Hannibal's mind to know what's about to happen, he nods and Hannibal slowly tangles his hands in Will's curls. Then he leans forward and softly whispers, “I can smell the sunlight on your skin.”

Will closes the distance between them and their lips meet. Their foreheads bump, but neither one of them cares, Will feels lightheaded and dizzy in the best kind of way. He wonders if the kiss is as brilliant for Hannibal as it is for him. He's never been kissed like this like the world might end if they part. Will knows Hannibal can hear his heart beating faster.

As suddenly as they embraced, Hannibal pushes Will away, his vampire teeth extended, he seems distraught as he says, “I should see you home.”

His breathing ragged Will says, “ All right.”

Mine

The next night Will is working when he sees a new face behind the bar. Well not a new face, Hannibal is the most exciting thing to happen in Wolf Trap for the longest time, not only because he is an undead, blood-sucking creature of the night, but because no one ever moves to town. Beverly Katz, with her long black hair twisted into some kind of bun, is simultaneously reading some sort of true crime novel between pouring drinks. Aside from Alana, Bev had been a friend of Will's for a long time. Will is surprised she's managing to turn pages with the crowd that has gathered tonight, but Bev is an excellent multitasker. He wonders when Jack hired her, She wasn't working the night he was attacked by the Rattrays.

Dawn calls out a greeting to a customer on her way to the food order counter while Terry Bellefleur carries a case of Corona behind the bar. An older woman is sitting at the bar who calls out to Beverly, Will doesn't have to look up when he hears the drunken slurs of Jane Bodehouse, "Hey, sugar. Make mamma another stinger, would you?" She can barely keep her head up.

"You listen to me, Jane Bodehouse. You're already drunk as a skunk. No man in here is gonna wanna take you home. Jack will have to call your son to come and get you just like he always does, even though everybody knows it humiliates him to death. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

Will holds in a snicker as he waits for Beverly to pour him a pitcher.

"What'd you just say to me?" Jane isn't smiling anymore.

Without skipping a beat, Beverly says, "I said any particular brand of cognac?" She closes her book and tucks it into the back pocket of her jeans. Will is surprised that the paperback is small enough to fit, considering how often both Alana and Bev complain about how small the pockets in women's clothing usually is.

Jane Bodehouse is drunk enough to believe her, "Ah ... no ... whatever you have that's nice and cheap."

Jack comes up to the bar and says, "I told you where you could buy your uniform."

"Jack, how come you don't wear a uniform?" She batted her eyelashes and put on an exaggerated sweet tone.

Unamused, Jack responds, "Because I own this place and wear what I want."

"Well, how come Terry Bellefleur doesn't wear a uniform?" Beverly goes back to being herself, no fake sweetness coming off of her. Just copious amounts of attitude.

"I've spent enough time in uniforms." It wasn't a secret that Terry was an ex-marine with terrible Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, the town hadn't treated him kindly, even though he

was a war hero. People would laugh at him and call him names. Some still do, but Terry is in a place where he lets it roll off of himself, like water off a duck's back.

She calls after Terry as he walks back to the safety of the kitchen, "No! ... because you're a man! And Jack doesn't feel the need to sexualize the men in his employment the same way he does the women." Bev says, finally filling up Will's pitcher.

Jack doesn't see her wink at him. Will knows it's all just to get Jack riled up and to get her out of wearing a Crawford's Bar and Grill T-shirt.

Will mouths a thank you to her as he takes it from her hands. He doesn't want to speak over Jack.

"Okay ... you don't have to wear a uniform." Jack doesn't want to have an argument about the sexualization of women in the workplace, when Beverly Katz wants to win an argument, she will. Even though Jack isn't trying to sexualize any of the servers here, "Remind me why I hired you again."

"Affirmative action." She sets Jane Bodehouse's drink down in front of her as Jack walks toward the back room.

Will makes his way across the room, he is waiting on a table of three guys, he sets the pitcher down along with the food he had grabbed in the service alley on his way over, "Loaded skins and a pitcher of Bud. Is that it for y'all?"

All three guys simultaneously say, "Yes." and "Yeah."

Will can hear the guy sitting closest to him thinking, "...Yes if you serve them nachos off them perfect abs, we'd all be mighty obliged. Ain't nothing I like more than lickin' food off..."

Plastering on a forced smile, well more forced than usual he says, "Okay then ...and turns to leave. Will can still hear the man thinking "...That's a fine ass too." Then he reaches over and grabs Will's butt. As fast as lightning, Matthew Brown appears seemingly out of nowhere and has the guy in an arm lock with his face pinned to the table.

"You wanna let go of the kid, you? Or you want me to knock you into next week?" Matthew grunted.

Will really hated that everyone felt the need to rescue him. He can take care of himself just fine, but no one would give him a chance.

"Damn it, you're about to break my arm." The guy says Will can hear his voice tremble, and he knows that the guy's eyes are watering.

"Apologize." Matthew applies a little bit more pressure, twisting the guy's arm ever so slightly. Will didn't have to look Matthew directly in the eyes to know something dangerous was there, he wondered what Matthew was capable of. if he ever used that anger to do

something other than chase away people who don't know how to keep their hands to themselves.

Immediately the guy gasps out a frantic, "Sorry."

Matthew lets the guy go and steps back a little, "Maybe you and your friends should find someplace else to eat, yeah?"

As he straightens up, he wipes the appetizer off his shirt, and the cheese and sour cream leave behind a stain. Quietly he turns towards his two buddies and whispers, "Let's go."

All three guys get up to leave. The second guy gives Matthew a parting look. As if promising the fight isn't over.

Matthew all but growls out, "Don't look at me, pig."

They scurry out the door, tails between their legs.

"Matthew, you should have let me handle that myself." Will is grateful but he is capable of fighting off a grabby customer. He's done it before.

"Crawford's is a nice place. And we all want to keep it that way. And besides, you remind me of my baby brother. I hope to God that somebody will stick up for him if some asshole ever does him that way." Matthew gestures his head toward the exit.

Will is a little flustered, laughs quickly, then turns and walks back toward the food counter area in the service alley, as he walks away he sees Matthew grab the pitcher of beer off the table and he's glad that Matthew and his work buddies are good for it. That way the beer won't come out of his paycheck.

"Arlene, would you tell Matthew thank you for helping me out with those jerks tonight? I was so flustered I think I might have seemed ungrateful." Will says as he passes her in the service alley.

Arlene is running her hand through her brilliant red hair, she seems distressed and distracted, Will really tries not to but he hears her thinking so loudly, "...Please let me get my period tonight. Even though Matthew wants one of his own, I sure don't want him to feel like he's being forced..."

Will rushes over to Arlene and gives her a timid hug, he isn't sure if it's the right thing to do, but he doesn't know what else to do.

Arlene seems a little put off, Will doesn't hug people often, "Did you just read my mind?!" She seems a little upset, but she doesn't pull herself out of the hug, instead, she wraps her arms around Will in return. She knows that Will has a hard time keeping it under control sometimes.

"Sorry. I'm not very focused tonight." He says, slowly backing up and out of the hug so as not to make her uncomfortable, he isn't sure when it's appropriate to let go, but he definitely would rather give a short hug than a long, creepy hug.

Arlene gives an uncomfortable smile, “You won’t tell anyone? My private thoughts are just that, private.”

“Of course! I am sorry for hearing it.” Will says, avoiding eye contact.

“I know you’re not trying to,” She wipes a tear from her cheek, careful not to smudge her makeup, and then Arlene quickly walks away.

Before Will can follow her and get back to his tables, Jack pokes his head out of his office door and says, “Will. Wanna step into my office?”

Will hates what he asks like if your boss asks you to come into his office you can say no and get on with your shift. He nods and walks in, shutting the door behind him. Jack leans against his desk, while Will sits opposite him in an armchair by the window.

“I swear I try not to listen, but ... I can't always keep my guard up. I don’t mean to hear it, you know that!” Will doesn’t want to lose his job because of something he can’t control.

“Is it true you can't hear the vampire's thoughts at all? God, that's... I mean, that must be very relaxing for you. You know, not havin' ... to work so hard not to hear.” Jack asks.

Will nods, “No ... yes.” Then he pauses and says, “Why do you care?”

“Can you hear me?” Jack asks. In all the time that Will has worked at Crawford’s, he had never intentionally tried to hear Jack, except during his interview. Will knows how he comes off, and he wanted to know if it was going well, but the thoughts were hard to hear like his ears were stuffed with cotton.

“I don't want to hear you.” Will gives his answer shortly.

“Why not?”

“I'd have to quit if I read your mind and I like it here,” Will says. He has heard what his previous bosses have thought of him, it isn’t a fun experience.

“You don't have to quit,” Jack says

Will sighs and runs his hands along his thighs, “I've had to leave every job I've ever had because I could hear my boss' thoughts”.

Jack hums to himself, probably mulling over what he’s going to say next. It’s quiet for a while before Jack says, “Try some time ... listen, don't you worry. You got a job here as long as you want one.”

Will scoffs, it was the only time someone had ever invited him into their head. But instead of taking him up on his offer Will says, “I should get back to work.” Will takes off like a bat out of hell as soon as he’s able. He doesn’t want to know what’s going on in people’s heads. He doesn’t want to hear Jack, Arlene, or anyone. He wants to be normal.

Lafayette interrupts Will's train of thought as he walks by the kitchen, "Baby girl, don't ever let that get you down."

"Don't let what get me down?"

Lafayette smiles reassuringly, "Don't let nothin' get you down. It's the only way to live. Ain't that right, Big John?"

Big John doesn't look up from the grill, he just says, "Right." Will doesn't have much of a relationship with Big John, so he isn't sure if it's in support of Will or if he's just learned to respond in agreement to Lafayette when he calls out.

Will smiles anyway and goes to lean on the bar.

Bev draws a pitcher of beer, while Dawn stands at the bar adding up a bill. They both start talking about a boy in town and Will quickly loses interest. He doesn't want to know who is sleeping with who, or who wants to sleep with who. He instead goes to each of his tables to see if any of his customers need anything and comes back when Dawn walks away.

"God only knows what happened to my tables while Jack tries to bond with me for some reason," He rolls his eyes. He pulls out his pad to add up a bill.

Bev smiles and dries off a glass.

Will spares a quick glance around the bar, making sure no customers are in dire need of his undivided attention, and then out of the corner of his eye he sees the news playing on television. He decides to read the subtitles, the announcer is silently saying, "In other news, a tragic car crash in town has claimed three lives today. Paramedics..." As he is adding up a bill, all of his attention is drawn to the television.

He sets down his pad and demands, "Hey, turn it up." Will's Gran raised him to be more polite but he doesn't have time for that right now.

Bev makes a face at him, but they've known each other their whole lives, she means nothing by it. But she rolls her eyes dramatically and uses the remote to turn up the volume for him anyways.

They hear the announcer towards the beginning of the report, "... Reverend Theodore Newlin, his wife, Yvette, and their 18-month-old daughter, Bethany -- all pronounced dead on arrival at Baylor University Medical Center. There were a total of seven other casualties as well in the freak accident, apparently caused when a freeway sign..."

"That's that bigot preacher who runs all that anti-vamp stuff." Jane slurs from where she sits across the bar.

Will can't bring himself to care that Jane's somehow still aware of her surroundings. He keeps his eyes locked on the television until the anchors segway into other news.

"I don't care that he was a Reverend, I'm glad that racist son-of-a-bitch is dead," Bev says. She mutes the TV again and they both get back to work, the whole time Will is craning his

neck to read the subtitles until someone demands the channel gets changed to watch the game.

After his shift, Will drives to Hannibal's house. The drive takes the same amount of time as it would if he had gone straight home, and he honestly can't wait to see Hannibal again. He feels giddy when he thinks of the vampire, and usually, he would shut those kinds of feelings down, but he is undeniably drawn to Hannibal. Like there's some invisible string tying them together.

There's a car with a Louisiana vanity license plate that says FANGS 1 out front of the Lecter house. Will instantly knows that the car doesn't belong to Hannibal. Not just because it's some souped-up convertible Lincoln Continental, but also because there are two kitschy bumper stickers one reading, "Vampires Suck" and the other says, "Honk if you're a blood donor"

There are lights on, on the first floor, and as Will gets out of the car and walks up the steps he can hear loud music playing. For a moment Will thinks if Hannibal has company, it might be rude to interrupt and that he should just head home. But then again, Hannibal needs this information to update his house, and he's already here, not to mention he was invited. He steals his nerves and just as he is about to knock, a black, female vampire opens it.

The woman vampire says, "Hey there, little human." She's about five-eleven, which is the same height as Will so he isn't sure why she's calling him little. She's wearing spandex. An exercise bra in flamingo pink with matching leggings, a man's white button-down is draped over the ensemble. Will wasn't one to judge but she didn't seem like the kind of company Hannibal would keep.

"Hi, I'm here to drop off some information about an electrician for Hannibal Lecter. Is he here?" He sees no reason to not be respectful to her. Especially if she is a guest of Hannibal, even though Will can't see why.

She simply says, "Maybe." With a coy smile. Will doesn't like the way she's eyeing him up, quite literally like he's a piece of meat. Will tries to read her mind, but just like when he tries to read Hannibal's he hears nothing.

Will straightens up and looks her in the eye and plasters on a customer service smile, "Well tell him I dropped by."

Another vampire, a man, joins the woman vampire at the door. He isn't remarkable in any way, he's wearing striped pants and a red button-up that was halfway done, exposing his chest, his chocolate brown hair was tousled and messy, the only part of him that seems like any thought was given to his appearance or his facial hair.

The man vampire leans over the woman's shoulder, "He smells fresh."

Will decides that that comment alone is enough for him to judge these vampires.

Hannibal was nothing like these vampires. He was sophisticated, thoughtful, and respectful. Will couldn't figure out why he would associate with vampires like this. Both vampires display their fangs and begin to snarl at Will. He has to admit he gets a little frightened and turns as if to leave, but finds a third male vampire, bald and tattooed, standing directly behind him. Will briefly wonders if he could somehow outmaneuver and run away from them, but then he remembered how quickly Hannibal had been able to run and put that thought to bed.

All three vampires continue snarling at Will. He turns around and faces the two vampires in front of him, "Can I go home?" He doesn't sound scared, he sounds irritated, which is his default inflection and it reassures him that his voice doesn't betray him. These three vampires seem like they'd be the type to get off on fear.

Speaking slowly the vampire with the mustache says, "Maybe you ought to come on inside." He has a smug look on his face, and if he wasn't a vampire, Will might have hit him. The way he speaks reminds Will of the graveyard from the night before when he asked Hannibal to try to hypnotize him.

"Are you trying to glamour me?" Will scoffs.

He is a little shocked that Will doesn't immediately fall in line and walk inside, "Yes."

Will shrugs and says, "That doesn't work on me." Will crosses his arms. Maybe if they realize they can't brainwash him, they'll let him go before they commit a crime.

The vampire behind him asks, "Why not?"

"I don't know. It just doesn't. Is Hannibal available? If he isn't, I want to go home."

Before any of the vampires can reply, Hannibal's voice firmly echoes from inside the house, "Let him in."

The vampires stare at him menacingly. Smirking, as if he was some kind of child being scolded by his parents. Hannibal was by no means his keeper and it annoyed him that these vampires seemed to think so.

"Diane! Let him in." Hannibal says firmly. Will wonders why he won't come to greet him at the door. He wonders why Hannibal is content to let these assholes harass him.

The female vampire, Diane, sighs, "Oh, fuck him."

The vampire next to her says, "You have," with a disgusting grin.

Will didn't want to think about that.

Diane and the man vampire draw apart, leaving a passageway between them for Will to enter the house. Will slowly walks by them and into the living room. He felt like he didn't really have a choice, with the bald vampire following him in, invading his personal space the entire time.

There's a young man, seated on one of the sofas and a woman, laying on the other. They're both half-naked and they seem unfocused, possibly glamourised. Will doesn't pay them much attention. Hannibal is seated in a corner of the room, facing Will. The three other vampires follow him into the room.

"Will y'all excuse me and Hannibal a minute, we have some business to attend to."

Diane snickers and speaks over Will, "Where'd you find this?"

Will glares at her, "This?"

The bald vampire comes up close and takes a deep breath, "Damn. He smells fuckin' sweet!"

The other vampire says, "And to think just five minutes ago you were telling us how you were living mainly on synthetic blood. You big poser."

Diane chimes in, "I don't know, Malcolm. He looks like a virgin to me."

"That's none of your damn business," He snaps. It was true, but they didn't need to know that. And why were they speaking over him and about him like he wasn't in the room? Will can recognize rudeness Gran yells at him about it all the damn time.

Diane steps towards him, but Will steps back, bumping into Malcolm, "It is my business, cupcake. You wanna know why? Because virgin blood ... is the best-tasting blood ... there is. Well, second best. The best would be..."

"Baby's blood." The bald vampire smiles, Will can't tell if he's lying or if he's just trying to scare him. Fast as lightning, he grabs Will and draws him in. His grip is like iron, Will can't break out of his grip, "I get hard just thinking about it."

"Get off of me." Will doesn't scream, but he says it firmly, he knows that these vampires can probably hear his racing heart, betraying the confidence he's trying to portray.

The vampire pushes Will's head to one side, exposing his neck. For a brief moment, Will thinks he's going to be ripped into like a piece of meat.

Even though he's incredibly close to sinking his teeth into Will's throat he simply says, "Ladies first." Diane draws near to Will's throat, but Hannibal quickly gets up out of the chair. Knocking it over as he rises.

"Stop! William is mine." His voice is commanding, it fills up the room.

Will wants to protest, he's not an object. He doesn't belong to Hannibal. But if it stops these trashy vampires from sinking their teeth into him, he'll bite his tongue.

Malcolm says, "Well! If you're Hannibal's, I certainly don't want to do anything to disturb your little arrangement. That's why I always bring Jerry with me ... wherever I go. He's like mad money." He gestures to the man sitting on the couch.

“Somebody needs to get down on my johnson.” The bald vampire says, letting go of Will. He wants to tell him exactly how disgusting he thinks this vampire is, but he also doesn’t want to get drained.

Malcolm and Diane cross the room and sit down on the sofa near Jerry, the woman gets up and crosses over to the bald vampire, she leans in and whispers something in his ear and he grins wickedly.

Will scrunches up his nose. As the pair retreats into darkness, but not far enough for Will’s comfort.

Diane is laughing and looking at Will, “Aw ... He's innocent.”

Hannibal all but growls, “He's mine.”

Will wasn't very coherent the last time Hannibal had been aggressive, the night the Rattrays attacked him, it was startling to see it up close and personal, though the other vampires seemed unamused.

Diane waves her hand dismissively, “Yeah, yeah, we got it.” Then she turns to Will. “So, why aren't you over there taking care of your master, human? Can't you see how hungry he is?”

Will is about to tell her that no one is his master, but before he can Malcolm says, “Uh ... Hannibal, if you're hungry you're more than welcome to have some of Jerry.”

Will didn’t like how they talked about Jerry like he was a piece of meat.

Jerry delicately gets up and crosses over to the opposite sofa and kneels down in front of Hannibal. Jerry bends his head and exposes his neck for him. Hannibal stares at Jerry’s neck. He glances at Will and his fangs descend. Will watches as Hannibal struggles to resist but finds he cannot. He starts drawing closer to Jerry's neck.

It’s eerily quiet except for the bald vampire whispering, “Come on, suck it.” from the corner of the room. Will doesn’t know anything about vampire culture, but if it’s fucking people while others are in the room, he wants no part in it.

Will can hear Jerry thinking, “...Stick them in already! Get infected, you fucking vampire asshole! Come on, do it! Let's see how you like Hep D. You fuckers ain't be able to move for like a year...”

Will shouts, “Stop, he has hep D!”

The room is completely silent as everyone looks at Will. Even the bald vampire has stopped and pulled his pants back up.

Jerry gets up and rushes at Will. All of the careful movement he showed earlier was abandoned, He grabs him around the throat and starts choking him! Will brings his hands up to Jerry’s forearm and pulls with all his might, Jerry can feel Will prying his hands off, so he pushes Will against the wall, the whole time thinking “...Fuckin' bitch! How does he know?! There's no way! I didn't tell a soul...”

Jerry was no vampire, but he was strong. Stronger than Will thought he'd be, he must only be in the earlier stages of the virus. Will manages to get one of Jerry's hands unclasped from Will's throat, "These fuckers killed Marcus!" Jerry screams. He has a ferocious look in his eyes as he thinks "...If he hadn't gotten hooked on V, he never would have left me. We would've been..."

Will tries to push Jerry's thoughts from his head but before he can Hannibal grabs Jerry's arm, forcing him away from Will with very little effort. With one swift movement, Hannibal breaks Jerry's arm and propels him across the room back to the sofa. The sound of both the ulna and the radius snapping echoes around in Will's head for a moment as the vampires close in around Jerry.

Malcolm quickly crosses over to Jerry as Hannibal kneels down next to Will and gently cradles his head with his hands. He checks Will's scalp for bumps before moving down to massage his neck.

Will can see Diane over Hannibal's shoulder, her fangs are still out, and she has a gleeful smile decorating her face. She was happy to see both Will and Jerry suffer, he didn't have to read her mind to know that much was true.

Hannibal is more terrifying than when Will saw him as a monster at Crawford's. So many ghastly things are piling onto Will that for a moment he wonders what he's gotten himself into and if he'll ever truly feel safe again. He giggles, or tries to, it comes out as a sickening, empty release of air.

Malcolm says, "Well, this has all been very ... illuminating. But we've got a long ride back to Monroe, and I'm sure we'll all wanna have a little talk with Jerry ... when he wakes up." Then Malcolm grabs Jerry and throws him over his shoulder like a sack of flour.

"Out, Janella. We're being evicted." The bald vampire tells the woman who was still on her knees.

"Hey! ... Isn't anyone even the slightest bit interested in how this little bitch knew about Jerry?" Diane shouts, she's gesturing to Will who is coughing on the ground.

Hannibal whispers in Will's ear, "You can't speak yet, can you, beloved?"

Diane quickly moves over to Will, and stares into his face, "I could make him talk."

"Diane ... You forget."

"Yeah, yeah ... He's yours. Whatever." She decides not to argue and saunters out the door.

Malcolm says, "Jerry, you stupid bitch. Nobody fucks with me and gets away with it." Then three vampires exit, Jerry slung over Malcolm's shoulder, and Janella walks with the bald vampire.

Hannibal gently raises Will into a sitting position. He quickly turns his back on him. Hannibal slowly gets up and walks across the room, "I'm sorry you had to witness that. Their

visit was unexpected.”

“What's hep D gotta...do with anything?” Will rasps out.

“Hepatitis D is the only blood-borne pathogen to which we are susceptible. Malcolm must be furious. A mutation. Relatively harmless to humans, oddly enough.”

“Is that common knowledge? I guess it wouldn't be.”

“That's because we've kept it out of the media.”

“And it makes you sick for a year?” Will couldn't imagine being sick for a year, but then again, a year to a vampire must be nothing in the grand scheme of their lives.

“No ... just makes us weak for about a month or so. The biggest danger to us from hep D is being captured and staked during that time.” Hannibal says he reaches out and brushes a stray curl out of Will's face.

“Yeah ... you don't want your weaknesses to be public knowledge.”

“Precisely.”

“And what the hell did you mean, "Will is mine"?!” He asks, he tries to remain neutral but his tone definitely gives away his anger.

“I was communicating to the others that you were my human, and therefore I was the only one who could feed on you.”

“Excuse me, you cannot feed on me!!” Will protests.

“Of course, I can't, Will! But had they known that they'd have considered you fair game, and I wouldn't have been able to stop them from attacking you. It'd be three against one, and Malcolm is much older than I am and quite strong.”

Will isn't interested in vampire customs, so he changes the subject, “And you and Diane dated?”

Hannibal carefully says, “We... had sex once ... just after she was made a vampire, back in the late 1930s.”

“She's so ... they're all so awful ... so...” He trails off, he doesn't want to insult them, but they really were the worst. Worse than any interaction with the Rattrays.

“Evil.” Hannibal finishes the sentence for him, “Yes, they are. They share a nest -- and when vampires live in nests they become crueller, more vicious. They become laws unto themselves. Whereas vampires such as I, who live alone, are much more likely to hang onto some semblance of our former humanity.”

Will wants to go home, he doesn't want to think about nests, or Diane, or Jerry, “Here. Contact info for two electrical contractors. They're willing to come out at night and give you

quotes.” Will takes the business cards out from his jacket pocket and gives them to Hannibal.

He smiles gently at Will, “Thank you.”

“I have to go,” Will says standing up. He avoids Hannibal’s gaze, something he hadn’t been doing since he rescued him from the Rattray’s.

“May I kiss you goodnight?” Hannibal asks.

“No,” Will regrets it immediately after he says it, especially thinking about the rush of their first kiss, “I couldn’t stand it after them.” Will knows if he stays any longer he’ll go back on what he said and let Hannibal do much more than kiss him, so he turns and heads out of the house. He resists every part of him that is telling him to go back inside. He gets in his car and drives home.

The drive home is too short for Will to calm down. He pulls into the gravel driveway and considers pulling back out and going for a long drive. But he feels so goddamn tired, instead, he pulls the keys out of the ignition and stares at the house. How dare Hannibal let fucked up vampire politics endanger him like that! Will knows Hannibal is infatuated by him, but how dare he ask to kiss him after Malcolm and Diane and their friend tried to eat him, and how dare he lay some kind of claim on him!

Not to mention this isn’t the first time his life has been on the line since Hannibal waltzed into his life.

Will isn’t sure how long he stewes in his anger but he knows it isn’t productive, so he takes a few deep breaths, and wipes the tears he didn’t know were there from his eyes. He rubs his face and once he feels calm and composed, he gets out of the car and locks it up.

He begins to approach the porch, he glances down while he puts away his keys and is startled when he looks back up and finds Hannibal standing in front of him, “Goddamn it, Hannibal, don’t do that!”

“I’m sorry. It wasn’t intentional. I just got here. I wanted to make sure that you were safe.” Hannibal descends the porch steps with impossible grace. Then he and Will stare at each other in silence for a beat.

Will finds himself trying to get inside Hannibal’s head. He wants to know where he gets the gall to just show up, caring for his safety after he was the one who put Will in danger in the first place. “Why can’t I hear your thoughts? Do you even have any thoughts?” He suddenly yells.

“I have thoughts ... many lifetimes of thoughts.” Hannibal seems upset with Will like he’s being irrational, and Will hates it. But more than that, he absolutely hates that Hannibal won’t come out and say that he’s upset.

“So why can’t I hear them?” Will knows he sounds indignant.

"I don't know. Perhaps it's because I don't have brain waves." Hannibal is being incredibly patient and Will gets the feeling that if he was anyone else, Hannibal would punish him for his rudeness.

Will asks, "Why not?" He knows the reason, but a part of him wants to keep Hannibal around, and Will hates that Hannibal has drawn him in that way.

"Because I'm dead." Hannibal steps closer. "I have no heartbeat. I have no need to breathe. There are no electrical impulses in my body. What animates you no longer animates me."

It makes perfect sense, he should end the conversation. He should go inside, say good night to his grandmother, go to sleep and forget about Hannibal Lecter, "What does animate you, then? Blood? How do you digest it if nothing works?"

"Magic."

"Oh, come on, I may look naive, but I'm not! And you ... you need to remember that." Will isn't going to let Hannibal pull him in again. Will has been put in three separate dangerous situations because of Hannibal. Even though Will wants to kiss him again and again, he doesn't want the darkness surrounding Hannibal. He doesn't want to see whatever it was he hallucinated that night he was bleeding out in Crawford's parking lot.

"You think that it's not magic that keeps you alive?" Hannibal is now close enough to touch, close enough to kiss, "Just because you understand the mechanics of how something works doesn't make it any less of a miracle, which is just another word for magic. We're all kept alive by magic, Will. My magic's just a little different from yours, that's all."

Will finds himself leaning into Hannibal.

Hannibal is leaning in too, their lips are dangerously close. Hannibal is waiting for Will to close the gap. Will knows that if he kisses him he won't be able to stop what happens next so instead he whispers, "I think we need to stop seein' each other."

Hannibal pulls away to look Will in the eyes, "Why?" He says it softly, but it's full of accusation.

Will avoids his gaze and runs up the porch steps. Before he goes in he says, "Because you don't breathe! You don't have any electrical whatever-it-is! Your friends would like nothing more than to rip my throat out! And because vampires killed that preacher from the Fellowship of the Sun church and his wife and baby! You look me in the eye and tell me they didn't do it!"

Hannibal lets all the vulnerability he was showing earlier melt away, "Humans have killed millions upon millions in senseless wars. I do not hold you responsible for that."

"The night before last, I had to bury my bloody clothes because I didn't want my grandmother to find out I was almost killed. And tonight, I was almost killed again! Why on earth would I continue seeing you?" Will shouts.

Hannibal walks up the steps and stands facing him, "Because you will never find a human man you can be yourself with."

Will knows that Hannibal is emotionally manipulating him, but what he hates is that it's working, he feels guilty he shakes his head and turns to go into the house.

"Will," Hannibal pleads as he grabs Will's arm, he's being gentle and it breaks Will, knowing that Hannibal is giving him a choice, he can pull away.

"Don't touch me. Just go, please." He doesn't pull away, instead, he waits for Hannibal to withdraw his hand. And he does. Will goes into the house and closes the door. He waits with his back pressed against the door as he hears Hannibal slowly walk down the creaky porch steps and head home.

Gran is already asleep when Will goes to check on her, he's relieved. He doesn't know what he'd tell her if she asked him about his day. He thinks maybe he would just tell her about work, and not what happened at Hannibal's. He doesn't want anyone to know, maybe because then people would say 'I told you so'.

He lays in bed thinking about how Hannibal is a source of danger in his life. But that doesn't mean Will was less drawn to him.

Will gets up out of bed and walks out to the back porch, it's still dark out, but he isn't sure how much longer it will last. The wind is causing trees to sway. Will hears a loud exhale and sees the black-feathered stag come around the side of the house. It locked eyes with him and then turned away, it began slowly walking. Will followed it around the side of the house and watched it go down the gravel drive. It pauses as if it's waiting for him to follow.

So Will does.

It takes him along the path he and Hannibal had walked the other night. They pass through the graveyard and then they are back at Hannibal Lecter's house. Will can see him through one of the windows, the kerosene lanterns are lit and they cast a soft glow around the room.

Will watched quietly, this was the Hannibal he knew, quiet and contemplative. Will doesn't know he has been moving forward until he feels the wood of the porch step under his foot, Suddenly, as if he could feel Will's presence, Hannibal bolts up and rips open the door, fangs bared." Don't ever sneak up on a vampire. What are you doing here?"

Will looks around, but the stag is gone. He looks down at himself, he's wearing a sweat-soaked tee-shirt and his boxers, he isn't entirely sure what is fiction and what is reality, "All right, here's the deal... and this is a little embarrassing. I've never been with anyone intimately, for all the reasons I told you about. But... I feel things when I'm with you that make me think and... I know this could be a huge mistake -- one I will regret forever... but it feels like you're the one that I'm supposed to, you know... And... I'm really nervous about that... and frankly -- I'm scared to death of you. So can we just get it out of the way already so

I can relax and get a good night's sleep?" Will doesn't think he's ever said so much in one go in his entire life.

Hannibal draws close to kiss Will, but before they can embrace, Will puts a hand on the vampire's chest and whispers with his lips inches away from Hannibal's, "Just... just don't bite me, okay?"

Hannibal and Will meet halfway, slowly beginning to kiss each other. For a brief moment, Will is scared that he'll nick himself on Hannibal's fangs, but that fear is soon forgotten. It was perfect, the way they were pushing against each other, embracing like the world might end if they let go.

Hannibal reaches down and grabs the front of Will's boxers, Will feels happy. He moves to unbutton Hannibal's shirt, but as he reaches out, the world around him fades to black and Will is standing in his bedroom. His shirt is covered in sweat. For the first time it isn't because of a nightmare. He was dreaming.

Suddenly wide awake, Will sees his own hand is in his boxers and he blushes, even though no one was around to witness it. Instead, he goes to the window and slams it shut, and draws the curtains together tightly. He has never had a dream like that before. Embarrassed, he climbs back into bed, he decides to sit up under the covers. He's still angry with Hannibal, so he plans on staying awake, that way his dream self can't go running back to the Lecter house.

The next morning, Will decides it's been too long since he has mowed the lawn. The yard work is one of the few things that Gran doesn't usually fight him on when he helps out around the house. He's been up for the better part of the night and he's already washed the dishes that were in the sink, weeded the flower beds and gravel drive, worked on the boat that's in the shed in the back yard and swept the porch. But it's finally a decent enough hour to mow the lawn, so that's what he decides to do.

"Will!" Gran calls out to him.

He turns off the mower and looks over at her grandmother.

"You're gonna faint out here in this heat, honey! It's barely 9:00 and already 80 degrees. Here. I made you some lemonade. Fresh-squeezed."

Will wipes the sweat from his brow as he makes his way over to the porch and takes the offered glass, "Thanks, Gran."

"You're wearing a flannel of all things! Goodness, what has got into you?" Gran scolds.

Will bends down and sets the glass between his feet so he can tie his flannel overshirt around his waist, "I just need to stay busy right now, that's all."

Gran looks at him disapprovingly, she probably would have held it if Will had asked, but he thought it would be rude to hand it back to her after taking it from her. “What? How long have you been up?”

Will picks up his glass, “I started uh ... on the lawn when the sun came up. But I was up much earlier than that. I just stayed inside.”

“Are you concerned about the vampire? Will, has he done something untoward?”

Will nearly chokes on the lemonade he had started to sip, “No! No! Not at all. Well, I'm just thinking... What I'm thinking is... is stay away, but... what I'm feeling... what I'm feeling ...with my whole body is... somethin' else entirely and I don't know whether to trust my... my head or...” he trails off and takes a long drink of his lemonade.

Gran says, “Heart,” nodding her head wisely and smirking knowingly.

Will doesn't respond, but Adele knows him too well.

“Well, that is a dilemma. Why don't you come on inside, and let me make you something to eat? If you're gonna be out workin' like a horse, you ought to at least to have somethin' in your stomach.”

“Thanks, but I'm not hungry,” Will says, he starts to walk back towards the mower. He's almost done with it anyway.

“I didn't ask ... if you were hungry,” Gran shouts after him and Will knows exactly where he inherited his stubbornness from.

Will looks at his grandmother and then follows her into the house. Will notices back by an old tree, a silent collie stands, and watches. After Will and Gran go into the house, he sees the dogs race away. Will wonders what it's doing so far from Crawford's if it is the same dog.

Will and Gran are sitting at the table eating a breakfast of eggs with toast, sausage, and hashbrowns because Adele Graham will not have her only grandchild starve himself. Will is sitting at the table, He's nursing his coffee when a thought pops in his head, “ Marthaville's gettin' a Starbucks.”

“I cannot for the life of me see why anybody would spend so much on a cup of coffee with too much milk,” Gran says shaking her head, as she pushes more sausage onto his plate.

“Arlene told me, that people are less calcium-deficient than they used to be because of all the fancy coffee they drink nowadays,” Will says.

“You know, I never thought of that, but it does make sense.” Gran liked her coffee sweet as sin and dark as night, she didn't add cream or milk, and because Will grew up in her house that's how he likes his coffee too. Will wonders briefly for a moment how Hannibal would have taken his coffee, back when he could drink coffee.

Thinking about Hannibal, Will asks, “Hey, Gran. Do you think I should continue seeing Hannibal?” Or letting himself be called on, courted, however the hell Hannibal was phrasing it.

“Will, I can't tell you that. I can tell you that I think he is a smart, handsome, and very polite young man, but of course, he's gonna show his best side to me so that I won't stand in the way of his courting you.” She tells him, matter-of-factly.

Will hesitates for a moment, but then decides to tell her point blank, “He scares me... A little,”

“Well, it is scary... opening your heart up to somebody,” Gran says.

Will scoffs, he's never been one to let his feelings get in his way like this. But then he thinks about the nesting vampires, and the Rattrays, “I think it's a little scarier... the vampire then... the regular guy?”

“I suppose.” Gran says, “Hannibal is the first vampire I ever met ...that I know of.”

“I'm not scared that he would ever hurt me... scared because... I don't know what he's thinking. With other people, I know when something, if anything will happen. Or that they like me, or are using me.”

“I would imagine that that wouldn't be such a bad thing for you with your... ability.” She sighs and thinks vaguely about wanting to help Will make a decision, but ultimately it's his to make.

Will sighs too as gets up and takes his plate to the sink.

“You know, your grandfather used to know things.”

Will straightens up over the sink with his back to Gran, “What things?”

“If somebody was having money problems... running around behind their wife's back... sick ...that kind of thing. Personal things they never would have told anybody about.”

Will finds himself slowly turning to face Gran, “See, that's exactly it. If I don't stop myself from it, I hear everybody's deepest, darkest secrets. I'm sorry. That's just too much information.”

Gran then leans in a little from where she's seated at the kitchen table, “But then Earl's brother, your Great-Uncle Francis, came back from Korea in real bad shape... all torn up from the things he'd seen. Earl knew he was thinking about killing himself. He went over there in the middle of the night one night. Francis was just about to kick the chair out from underneath him... already had the noose around his neck. But Earl talked him out of it. I just think there is a purpose for everything that God creates, whether it's a unique ability or a cup of overpriced coffee with too much milk ... or a vampire. God will reveal that purpose when the time is right.”

Will walks over and kisses Gran on the cheek. Then starts going back towards the mudroom and towards the porch. He stops mid-stride, and goes back down to the kitchen, "Wait. I thought Great-Uncle Francis did kill himself, with a shotgun."

Gran humms. "Oh, yes, he did, but that was years later."

During the day, Will goes to Hannibal's house. He isn't entirely sure why, but he walks over there and sits himself down on the porch stairs. He wonders if Hannibal ever has sleepless days, where he wanders around his house, with curtains drawn so tightly not a bit of light could peek through. He hopes if that's the case Hannibal is awake now, and thinking of him. He knows it's selfish and vain, but he wants to believe Hannibal is losing as much sleep over Will as he is over him.

Will looks around. The trees and sky shimmer and take on brighter hues, the gentle breeze is cool on Will's skin, and he feels calm sitting on the steps, which is strange considering he was nearly eaten here less than 12 hours ago.

The quiet is interrupted by the harsh sound of Will's ringtone. Annoyed he answers, "Hello."

"Hey Will, it's Jack. Could you do me a favor?" He sounds upset, but Will doesn't pay much attention to that.

"Um... sure... maybe." Will didn't know why, but he dreaded leaving the spot on Hannibal's porch. Maybe because he had to talk to the vampire the second the sun sunk below the horizon. About what... Will wasn't sure, but he knew he had to talk to him.

"Listen, I'm set to open for lunch in about 20 minutes, and Dawn still hasn't shown up for her shift."

"Dawn is always late," Will says matter of factly, Jack shouldn't be bothering him.

"I know, but I called her cell and her landline, and she isn't answering."

"How many times did you call her? You know she doesn't pick up the landline unless you've left a message." Will knows because Dawn is usually the one who he has to get a hold of if he needs a cover.

"I did, Will--"

"Jack, I really need my day off!" Will cuts him off.

"No, no, I'm not asking you to come in. I just need you to run by Dawn's and wake her up. She probably just overslept."

Even though Jack can't see it, Will rolls his eyes and says, "Fine."

Will wasn't Dawn's biggest fan, and Will knew he wasn't hers. It was nothing personal, she just never wanted him poking around in her head and he could respect that sentiment, but he

couldn't control it. On more than one occasion he had heard her thoughts only for her to yell at him or slap him. She wasn't the first and probably won't be the last person offended by Will's curse.

Will makes it back to Gran's with relative speed, the last thing he wants to do is go over to Dawn's and tell her she doesn't have time to look cute today because she's nearly an hour late for her shift. He also showered, threw on his uniform, and brushed his teeth, in case Dawn was too hungover to go in. Before he left he told his Gran what was happening and kissed her cheek as he headed out.

Will peered through the windshield at the duplexes on Berry Street. He's only been to Dawn's once before, she was throwing a party and Lafayette had somehow managed to talk him into going. Will remembers that night with too much clarity because he was the only sober one there. He had to deal with everyone freaking out when the deputy came over to tell them to keep it down. It didn't take long for him to find Dawn's car parked, a little green compact, in the driveway on the left side of her duplex.

Will decides to park on the street so he isn't blocking Dawn in, in case she decides to take-off faster than Will could, "Dawn? ...It's me, Will." He announces as he knocks on the door, "Dawn, you overslept." She had begonias hanging in a basket on the porch, but they looked a little dry, so she hasn't been up to water them yet.

After waiting for a moment, Will gets worried, Dawn could have slipped in the shower or hit her head so he opens the flimsy screen door and pounds a little frantically at the inner door, "Dawn, are you alright?"

"Will, do you need help?" Will recognizes the voice and turns around. He shields his face from the sun to see Matthew Brown standing by his pickup, parked across the street at one of the small frame houses that populated the rest of the neighborhood.

"Jack said he needed someone to check on Dawn. She isn't at work. Have you seen her?" Will asks.

"Jack should do his own dirty work," Matthew says.

He doesn't leave much room for Matthew's reply when he says, "Truck came today, he had to be there to unload, otherwise no one is eating there today." Will wasn't the best at making conversation, aside from Gran. And Maybe Lafayette, but Lafayette had a way of commanding everyone's attention. If he wanted to talk to you, you were going to talk to him.

Matthew stands awkwardly by his door, looking unsure of wanting to stay or go. Will decides Matthew's dilemma is not his problem and turns to knock again. Will notices that Dawn's porch is solid concrete and covered in pine pollen from a nearby tree. His were the only footprints. Will felt his scalp prickle uncomfortably.

This time Will pounds on the door. Not getting any answer, Will says fuck it and tries the door handle and it squeaks as it opens. Stepping inside Will shouts, "Dawn! Are you here?"

Will hears Matthew say he was going to go check around back.

The house is small with a simple setup, Living room, kitchen, two bedrooms, and a bathroom. Will steps around the mess in the living area. Dawn had trash and empty beer bottles on the floor, blankets thrown everywhere, and take-out bags on her counter. Will pays no attention and walks back through to the master bedroom. Will notices that all of the curtains, though thin, are drawn in an attempt to keep out the light.

The alarm is going off and Will can hear it from the hallway.

Will doesn't knock on the bedroom door, he walks right in and immediately can tell the wreck isn't Dawn's usual disorganized self, it appears there has been a struggle. The sheets look like they were thrown around wildly, he can see parts had been violently ripped. Dawn is laying on her back on the bed, her legs are spraddled and her head dangling off the edge uncomfortably.

Will can see her lifeless face, swollen and discolored. Her eyes are wide open. Her tongue is hanging out. Flies were crawling all over it, in and out of her mouth.

Will calls her name a few times in shock, but he knows she isn't going to sit up and kick him out. Dawn is undeniably gone. Forever.

Will doesn't scream, but he wants to, but something tells him that he should just call the sheriff's department. He takes his phone out of his pocket, time feels like it's passing agonizingly slow, he dials 911.

"Um... Dawn Green's house...I'm at Dawn Green's house."

Will doesn't really hear the questions that are being asked, he just says, "I found her. She's dead and I found her."

He can't bring himself to leave her, logically he knows he can't touch anything, so he continues to stand there and wait. Matthew eventually comes in and gasps when he sees Dawn. Will is still on the line with the police, but he isn't responding. Matthew wrenches the phone out of his hand and starts speaking.

Will feels like he's underwater, his ears are ringing, and all he can do is stare. Until he hears a siren and the fog in his head clears a little. Matthew takes Will's wrist and pulls him out of the room, then out onto the porch to go speak with Sheriff Dearborne.

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